ENTERTAINMENT / D1
Gawad Kalinga movie 'Paraiso,' screened in US

WORLD / A19
Math experts finally solve E8 problem

WORLD / A20
US, North Korea resolve bank row; talks begin

BUSINESS / B1
91-day T-bill rate inches up to 2.998%

NEWS / A2
Survey shows militant party-list groups ahead

Radical solutions to global warming pose bigger risks

WASHINGTON—WHEN climate scientist Andrew Weaver considers the idea of tinkering with Earth's air, water or sunlight to fight global warming, he remembers the lessons of a favorite children's book.

BIGDEAL/ A3

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Tuesday, March 20, 2007 ▲▲ Vol. 22 / No. 102 website: www.inquirer.net

Atong's plea bargain gets him 6 years in jail

By Jocelyn R. Uy

DANILO "ATONG" ANG, A FORMER GAMBLING buddy of deposed President Joseph Estrada, was sentenced yesterday to between two years and four months and six years in prison instead of up to 40 years.

The Sandiganbayan meted out the sentence as part of the deal Ang had struck with the

ATONG'S/ A6

Satur taken for a ride

Palace hand seen in Ocampo snafu

By Tony S. Bergonia

THE CABINET'S NATIONAL SECURITY cluster was the unseen hand in the move to forcibly transfer Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo to a Leyte jail, an indication of official Malacañang involvement in the abortive operation, Inquirer sources said yesterday.

Palace officials said the group—officially called the Cabinet Oversight Committee on Internal Security (Cocis)—met recently to discuss several issues, but spent much of its time on the case of Ocampo, the militant lawmaker charged with the murders of suspected military spies, whose supposed skeletal remains were found in a mass grave in a Leyte town.

PALACE/ A5

POLICEMEN drag Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Satur Ocampo into a waiting van early Monday morning for the trip to the airport and a flight to Tacloban City to face charges in a 23-year-old mass murder case. Holding on tightly to Ocampo is Rep. Teddy Casiño (left), also of Bayan Muna.

Judge aborts trip to Leyte, says solon may stay in Manila

By Tarra Quismundo and Alexis Papa

THEY WOKE HIM AT 3 A.M., shoved him into a van over his protests, then took him to the airport, where they spirited him away on an eight-seater private plane to Leyte.

The police and militant Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo, the man they had intended to bring before a Leyte judge to answer charges of multiple murder, never reached their destination, however.

Two and a half hours into the flight and while flying over Masbate, the Cessna plane unexpectedly turned back and the hair-raising operation—carried out with Malacañang's backing—turned into what Ocampo later described as "a joyride."

The flight was aborted by no less than Leyte Judge Ephrem Abando himself who ordered Ocampo's appearance before his court delivered. Abando's order would allow Ocampo to remain in Manila, for the time being.

"It was a joyride. We flew out of Manila and just returned. It was quite [an adventure]," the 67-year-old congressman told the Inquirer upon his return.

Defiant all the way, Ocampo had protested his transfer to Leyte on

SATUR/ A6

Court orders arrest of Inquirer editors Mike A sued for libel

By Tina Santos

A MANILA COURT YESTERDAY issued warrants for the arrest of business columnist Ramon Farolan, the publisher and eight editors of the publication after it found probable cause to support the libel case filed against

COURT/ A4

Son cries but others are just plain mad

By Christine V. Esguerra

HIS FATHER MAY HAVE PUT ON A STOIC face and his mother a defiant one.

But it was the son who expressed the pain the family of Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo was feeling.

"Nakakapagod na (It's wearying)," Ocampo's son Antonio said between sobs during the "Solidarity Gathering" for the detained party-list lawmaker at Club Filipino in San Juan, Metro Manila, yesterday.

Amid the strong show of support from a cross-section of society, Antonio broke into tears while his father was in a police hangar, awaiting a final decision to fly him to far-flung Hilongos in Leyte.

"I don't want him to go on like this .... He's turning 68 and he still finds it difficult to be with his children and grandchildren," Antonio lamented in Filipino, noting that last Friday was the third time that his father had been arrested.

"That's why I ask for your support and prayers," he told his audience.

Antonio and his family received plenty of support from opposition stalwarts, human rights lawyers, academicians and members of the religious who banded yesterday into the "Free Satur, Stand for Justice" movement.

Among them were National Artist for Li-

SON CRIES/ A8

Meet the Romeros: 3 generations of mistahs

By Cathy S. Rubas-Gubalia

CADET 1ST CLASS MARC ANTHONY Romero of the "Maragtas" Class of 2007 etched a place in Philippine Military Academy history by becoming only the third graduate of a three-generation PMA family.

His grandfather, Brig. Gen. Antonio Romero, was a member of Class 1941.

His father, Armed Forces of the Philippines Vice Chief of Staff Maj. Gen. Antonio L. Romero II, belongs to Class 1974.

Yesterday, it was Marc's turn to graduate from the academy and join the Philippine Army.

A former PMA superintendent, retired Maj. Gen. Rodolfo Tzovilleda says that of the approximately 8,000

MEET/ A6

Protect republic, GMA tells PMA cadets

By Michael Lim Ubac

BAGUIO CITY—SHOWING NO SIGN of letting up on her all-out war against terrorists and state enemies, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday told the new graduates of the Philippine Military Academy to protect the republic from those who would sow terror.

"We will go and we will fight," the President declared in her speech before the 282 members of the Maragtas Class of 2007, capped by woman cadet Andrea S. Mojica, on the academy's Fort Gen. Antonio Del Pilar Field.

Ms Arroyo acknowledged that the fresh graduates were "excited" to go to war-torn Jolo, Sulu, but she also urged them to "build schools, roads, feed the children, teach them to read, and you will understand one another's religion."

With the newly signed Human Security Act, more popularly known as the anti-terror law, and funding to buy equipment such as helicopters for the Armed Forces of the Philippines, Ms Arroyo said the young soldiers were in a better position to ensure that all citizens "enjoy equal protection and freedom from fear."

"And this is what you Maragtas Class 2007 will provide for the people," the President stressed. "The force of political stability must be seen in all other facets of our national life rather than just in terrorism and antiinsurgency, safe streets, inviolable homes, public mobility free from crime."

The President said that through the new second lieutenants, "government will reach the farthest communities of the land and assure their security and freedom. Because you ... will be an enabler of a peaceful and productive life among our people."

Her marching orders to the new soldiers: "Have a leader's heart."

Ms Arroyo said she did not need to re-

PROTECT/ A6

POMP AND CIRCUMSTANCE

President Macapagal-Arroyo (left), watched by the military top brass, steps up to a platform for arrival honors during the graduation of Philippine Military Academy Maragtas Class of 2007 on Monday at Fort del Pilar in Baguio City. Graduating cadets (above), led by class valedictorian Andrelee Mojica, take their oath as newly commissioned officers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

ORVIL&ON

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

Survey shows militant party-list groups ahead

By Kate Pedroso
Inquirer Research

THIRTEEN PARTY-LIST GROUPS WOULD HAVE won at least one seat in Congress had the elections been held during the first week of the month, according to a recently released survey by Pulse Asia Inc.

The survey showed that one in ten registered Filipino voters (10 percent) was unsure of the party-list system, and nearly six in 10 (57 percent) voters said they would elect a party-list group to the House of Representatives.

Pulse Asia's March 2007 (1st ng Buwan) Ulat ng Bayan (Report of the Nation) survey, which was conducted from Feb. 28 to March 3, also found that militant Bayan Muna led the list of probable winners, with an overall voter preference of 11.9 percent, which meant that the group would retain the three seats it won in the party-list elections. Representatives Satur Ocampo, Teodoro Casiño and Joel Virador.

The release of the survey came on the heels of Ocampo's arrest, inclusion of the Supreme Court on Friday on charges of ordering the killing of militancy spies in the communist movement years ago, two colleagues.

Bayan Muna identified the other party-lists that would have secured one representative each to the House of Representatives as follows: Anakpawis (Toiling Masses) (3.6 percent), Gabriela Women's Party (3.6 percent), Akbayan (3.5 percent), Abante ng Sambayanan para sa Pagbabago (2.4 percent), Anak Mindanao (Anak), 2.4 percent), Buhay (2.2 percent), Alyansa ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino (Alyansa) (2.0 percent), Alyansa ng Mamamayang Aktibo (Aksyon) (1.9 percent), Alyansa ng Bagong Bayani (1.7 percent), Aangat Tayo (1.6 percent), Angat Buhay (1.5 percent), Ang Kasangga Mo Ako (1.4 percent), Ako Bicol Political Party (1.4 percent), Ako Bicol Political Party (1.4 percent), Ako Bicol Political Party

Comelec sets probe of AFP men in metro

By Jerome Aning

THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS (Comelec) said it would not file itself if administrative charges against military officers who campaigned for administration candidates in the May 14 elections would be filed by the poll body's regional offices.

Comelec spokesperson Jimmy Bondoc said the poll body's regional offices would file the charges against the officers.

Bondoc said the Comelec en banc would not file the charges itself because it would be a violation of the rules of due process.

Bondoc said the Comelec en banc would only act as the appellate body in the event that the officers would appeal the decision of the regional offices.

Bondoc said the Comelec en banc would only act as the appellate body in the event that the officers would appeal the decision of the regional offices.

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Government Must Enforce Rule of Law in Hacienda Velez-Malaga

Install the Farmer-Beneficiaries in Their Land Now!

The failure of government last March 8 to place the 122 farmer-beneficiaries of Hacienda Velez-Malaga in the land awarded to them five years ago was a telling blow on the rule of law and social justice.

Despite all factors for a successful installation—absence of legal impediment, readiness of the Army and Police to secure, moral and legal rights of farmer-beneficiaries—Acting Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser Pangandaman aborted the installation on the pretext of avoiding bloodshed.

If the government is willing to install, it can install, despite threat of violence from the former landowner who has no more rights to the land.

It was Pangandaman's prime mandate to install, but clearly his inability to implement such a basic tenet of the agrarian reform program seriously undermines the rights of our poor farmers. His continued stay in the Department of Agrarian Reform puts to severe test the credibility and sincerity of this administration.

The installation of farmer-beneficiaries in Velez-Malaga, one of so many contentious haciendas in Negros Occidental, is a national political issue. It symbolizes the struggle of Filipino farmers for equitable ownership of land, the very soul of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program.

CARP is a flagship anti-poverty program. President Macapagal-Arroyo should assure the Filipino farmers that CARP is still a priority program of her administration, and that they still have hope under this program.

The President must end the suffering of the farmers who are on 27th day of hunger strike in front of DAR. All they ask is to be installed in their land.

WE CALL ON PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO:

1. **TO DIRECTLY FACILITATE THE IMMEDIATE INSTALLATION OF THE 122 FARMER-BENEFICIARIES IN THE 144 HECTARES AWARDED TO THEM UNDER CARP**

2. **TO APPOINT A NEW PERSON CAPABLE OF DOING THE BASIC JOB OF A DAR SECRETARY**

3. **TO ENSURE MILITARY OR POLICE PROTECTION FOR THE FARMER-BENEFICIARIES AGAINST VIOLENCE BY FORMER LANDOWNER ROBERTO CUENCA**

MADAM PRESIDENT, THE LIVES OF HUNGER STRIKING FARMERS ARE AT STAKE. PLEASE ACT NOW BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE.

Archbishop Ramon C. Arguelles, S.D., Lipa City • **Archbishop Angel N. Lagdameo**, S. D., Jaro, Iloilo • **Archbishop Antonio J. Ledesma**, SJ, D.D., Cagayan de Oro City • **Bishop Mar Yohannan Bar Titoos**, Eastern Catholic Church of the Philippines • **Fr. Joaquin Bernas**, S.J., Dean Emeritus, Ateneo Law School • **Fr. Romeo Intengan**, S.J., ex-Provincial, The Society of Jesus • **Atty. Christian Monsod**, Chairman, PARTIDO • **Rep. Rosa Horthensia Bareng-at**, Akbayan Party List • **Jose Noel Diana**, Former DAR Undersecretary for Operations • **Ms. Karen Tañada**, Executive Director, GZO PI • **Ronald Llamas**, President, MAMAYA Party List • **Carmelo Navarro**, Executive Director, Agrarian Justice Fund, Inc. (AJF) • **Edwardo B. Gerlock**, CORE, Inc. • **Mary Racelis**, Board of Trustees, PAFID • **Pastor Emmanuel Alano**, ARA-Negros • **Raul Socrates Benzuela**, National Coordinator, PAKISAMA • **Atty. Marlon Manuel**, Chairman, Administrative Law Group (ALG) • **Ramon Clarete**, Executive Director, Institute of Political and Electoral Reforms (IPER) • **Luz Bantiloc**, CCM Multiversity • **Joel Rocamora**, • **Rep. Hamedha Abad**, Lone District, Batanes • **Rep. Mario Aguja**, Akbayan Party List • **Rep. Loretta Ann Rosales**, Akbayan Party List • **Rep. Mujiv S. Hataman**, Anak Mindanao (AMIN) Party List • **Rep. Joel Villanueva**, DSAC Party List • **Leonor Bello Enoj**, Director, Ateneo Development Studies Program • **Dennis Tolosa Jr.**, Economist, One Voice and Puyat Jacinto • **Irene Fernandez**, Batis Mindanao • **Raphael Dizama**, Chairman, AMIGARA Foundation • **Fr. Arnold M. Abelardo**, CSP • **Fr. Ben Maranata**, Kadangyan • **Fr. Apolonio M. Ranche**, St. Andrew's Theological Seminary • **Fr. Ruben Tanseco**, S.J. • **Fr. Jose Cecilio Magadia**, S.J. • **Fr. Rio de Jesus, S. J.**, Rector of San Jose Seminary • **Scholastic Jevie Alpasa**, S.J. • **Sr. Maria Luz Mijares**, OSA, Co-Chairperson, Association of Major Religious Superiors in the Philippines (AMRSP) • **Sr. Estela Cordero**, FASC • **Sr. Zeda Villareal**, OSA • **Sr. Regina Cesar**, OSA • **Sr. Fidya Calungal**, OSA • **Sr. Zeda Villareal**, OSA • **Sr. Regina Cesar**, OSA • **Sr. Fidya Calungal**, OSA • **Sr. Carmelita Victoria**, S.Sp.S., Provincial Leader, Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit • **Sr. Victoria Penaroia**, S.Sp.S. • **Sr. Emelina Villegas**, ICM • **Sr. Lucy Dizon**, CSI • **Gary Granada**, musician • **Dino Cumillon**, Filmmaker • **Franco Claveriñas**, Community Organizer/Former Philippine Entertainer (CORE) • **Renato Matienzo**, Secretary General, Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (PAHRA) • **Dennis Murphy**, Former Peace Association (PA) • **Leo Tadeus**, JPIC/ AMRSP • Senatorial Candidate Alan Peter Cayetano • **ORGANIZATIONS**: Samahan ng Alternatibong Lingap Panlipat (SALIGAN) • Bukluran Magsasakang ng Alternatibong Kultura, Inc. (BMAK TSAITRO) • Samahang SJ Ekonomiya Makabuo • Pambansang Kilusan ng Kabataan sa Kanayunan (PKKK) • KAISAHAN lungsi sa Kasimanan ng Kanayunan at Repormang Pansakahan • People's Campaign for Agrarian Reform Network (AR-Now!) • Management and Organizational Development for Empowerment (MODE) • Youth Organizations United Towards Humanism and Social Change (YOUTH) • BALAOD- Mindanao Center for Agrarian Reform Empowerment and Transformation (CARET) • Pambansang Koalisyon ng mga Samahan sa Kanayunan (PKSK) • Pambansang Kilusang mga Samahang Magsasaka (PAKISAMA) • Kilusang Mangingisda (KMI) • MAKABAYAN Pilipinas • Philippine Network of Rural Development Institute (PhRen- RDI) • Centro Saka, Inc. (CSI) • PANALIPDI- Pilipinas • Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas (PhDev RRA) • People's Alternative Studies Center for Research and Education on Social Development (PASCRED) • Pambansang Samahang Nagkakaisa ng Pilipinas (PANAMIN) • Coalition of Services for the Elderly (COSE, Inc.) • Coalition of Older Philippine Nationalist of the Philippines (COPNAP) • KILUSAN-PRO • Citizen's Council for Human Rights (CCHR) • Coalition For A Citizens Constitution (CAC) • Kilusan para sa Kapayapaan at Kalikasan (KAKAPKA) • Agrarian Reform Advocates of Negros (ARA Negros) • AKBAYAN-Negros • Lakas ng Kababaihang Magbubukid sa Kanayunan (LAKASBIRO) • Kalipunan ng mga Samahan ng Maralitang Mindanawon sa Kanayunan (KASAMA-KA) • KASAMA-Bataan • Bukidnon Farmers Agrarian Reform Alliance (BUFARA) • Davao Oriental Farmers Alliance for Rural Development (DOFARD) • Philippine Community Organizers Society (PHILCOS) • Student Council Association of the Philippines (SCAP) • Focus on the Global South Philippines Programme • Land Research Action Network Philippines • Philippine Legislator's Committee on Population and Development (PLCPD) • Bahaghari ng Maralita • Medical Action Group (MAG) • Tabor Urban Poor • KASAMA-Pilipinas • Kabut Pag-asa • Caucus of Development NGO Networks (CODE-NGO) • Partido Demokratiko Sosyalismo ng Pilipinas (PDSP) • **MILAGROS DIKSAPIN**, Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Commission of the Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines (JPIC-AMRSP) • Dominican Province of the Philippines • Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (SIHM) • Tahanan ng Langkal ng Bayan (SLB) • Kalipunan ng Kilusang Anduhan (KAKALAGA) • Augustinian Missionaries of the Philippines • JPIC Columban Fathers • Claretian Missionaries Fathers (CMF) • Lingkod ng Panginoon • Promotion of Church People's Response • Sannine Missionaries

HONORARY DEGREE
The Technological University of the Philippines, in collaboration with the Commission on Higher Education, conferred the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Technology Management, honoris causa, on Dr. Jaime G. Dy, noted businessman, philanthropist and civic leader, on March 8 at the TUP campus grounds in Ermita, Manila. Conferred the same degree was Edward L. Ferrera, Philippine consul general in Kazakhstan and former president of the Management Association of the Philippines. Also on stage are CHED Commissioner and TUP Board of Regents chair Nona S. Ninobert, TUP president Dr. Godofredo E. Gallega and CHED chair Carlito S. Puno.

It's summer: Worms, disease warning out

By Edwin C. Tamayo Jr. and TJ Burgonio

THIS SUMMER, PROTECT YOUR children from dehydration, diarrhea and worms.

"Drink lots of water. We should always hydrate ourselves and our children," said Yolanda Oliveros, director of the National Center for Disease Prevention and Control.

Fevers should make sure, however, that the entire season is clear. Doctors must stay on the job during summer, Oliveros warned.

When going out of town, eat and drink in places that are clean because dirty food and water can cause diarrhea and enteric infections.

In a study last year, the University of the Philippines found that 60 out of 10 school children were infected with worms.

Oliveros said worms could stunt mental and physical growth and damage internal organs.

The Department of Health said its treatment for it would continue the mass deworming of children which it started last year to curb soil-transmitted helminthiasis in the country.

Health Secretary Francisco Duque said the department wants to reduce the prevalence of enteric infections from the current 54 percent to 30 percent by 2010.

In October 2000, the DOH distributed deworming tablets to children under 6 years through health centers all over the country. The next round of deworming for this age bracket will be in April.

In January, school children between ages 6 and 12 were given free deworming tablets in the public schools. The next deadline for this group will be in July.

The Fun Tablets project I twice a year will be sustained for three years or until 2004. That is funded by the DOH, the Council for the Welfare of Children, the World Health Organization, Unicef and feed the Children International.

The weather will be hot and dry this summer in Metro Manila and the areas west of the country, including the Bicol region, Central Luzon and Southern Tagalog.

According to the weather bureau, there will be downpours every now and then, but only in the eastern side of the country which includes Eastern Visayas and eastern Mindanao.

"We're in the dry season, but not by the entire Philippines," said Nathaniel Cruz, weather branch chief of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa).

He, however, stressed that while the summer heat of the country would experience heavy rainfall, this would only be for a short period and would not trigger floods.

Cruz explained that the rainfall area an offshoot of the heavy rain continuation of the weather system, the so-called Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ), associated with thunderstorms and calms.

He said the dry season would prevail in the western part of the country for the next two months and would to peak in May.

Valli was reported normalization of the northeast monsoon, an expert the temperature to get a little summer, and this will last until May," Cruz said.

So far, the metropolis recorded the hottest temperature last Friday at 36 degrees Celsius at Aldaba, and 35.5 degrees Celsius in Quezon City.

It is expected "to go up to the roasting days" but will not reach 42.2 degrees Celsius, the highest temperature recorded in Tuguegarao, Cagayan, in 1969.

"My dear expect that scorcher to broken," Cruz said, who advised the public to avoid "long exposure" to the sun, particularly between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. to avoid dehydration, skin irritation or heat stroke.

He chose who work under the sun a three hours, the traffic enforcers, construction workers, farmers and fishermen, they should take frequent liquids, wear caps and long sleeved shirts to protect themselves from the roasting heat, he said.

More girls than boys finish high school, study shows

By Margaux C. Ortiz

WOMEN EXCEL IN HIGH school.

According to a study by the Department of Education, there are more female students, teachers and school heads in the public high schools than males.

In the latest Country Relationship Assessment, the Department noted that more girls completed elementary and high school than boys.

Aside from economic reasons, one possible reason behind boys dropping out of school is the dominance of female teachers in the [illegible] system.

Deped Assistant Secretary Lilia Bautista said in an education workshop organized by the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) and Gabriel Organization Alumni in the Baguio-Lepan Center in Antipolo City over the weekend.

Bautista said the system might not be sensitive or responsive to the tendency and learning needs of boys or boys drop out.

She said that despite having more male enrollees in the early childhood education (ECE) and elementary levels, key economic indicators showed that both male and female literacy rates of male youths and adults were lower than their female counterparts in high school.

"Female dominance in education is also manifested in persons who hold key positions in the system," Bautista told in her presentation, explaining that the majority of public elementary school teachers and school heads were women.

She said that females likewise dominated key management positions such as the supervisors, district and division levels.

"We are going to conduct a more in-depth study to find out and confirm the reasons behind this trend," Bautista said.

In the same presentation, the DepEd official said the government's MDG targets in elementary and secondary net enrollment and completion rates had not been achieved.

"There was a downward trend in elementary and secondary net enrollment and completion rates from 2000 to 2005," she said.

DepEd studies showed that the number of Grade 1 applicants with ECE had been erratic, with the country failing to attain its 2005 target of 95 percent.

"The DepEd has a very limited allocation for ECE, which is less than one percent of its yearly budget," Bautista said.

The DepEd studies also revealed that more students dropped out of the system as they progressed from one grade to the next, Bautista said.

'Barbing Pinay' to soothe Bicol kids

TO HELP CHILDREN IN BICOL who were traumatized by the series of supertyphoons hitting the region, students from the University of the Philippines and Ateneo de Naga and a group of out-of-school youth will teach them how to make dolls they can play with.

Just workshop dubbed "Barbing Pinay" will be held in the Naga's Hotel Centro from March 30 to April 2, participants will create cloth dolls with clothes, accessories and life stories.

Most of the children lost their families, homes and kins when Reming unleashed its fury last year.

Organizers said the workshop would provide venues of communality and an occasion for surviving children and adults to interact and bond. They will share stories, talk and ideas, and play games together while they make their dolls.

The UP delegation will be composed of "Sir Around Us" cast members 22 students of Prof. Faculty May 9 Center of the Department of Art Studies. The group will be headed by Jean Linda of the Mangyang Studies Foundation and Tomas Community Center.

To raise funds, the UP students will hold a campaign sale on March 26. They will also collect books for the Tomas Community Center's library and relief goods for the people still living in evacuation centers.

More information may be obtained at www.bicbiggirrs.multiply.com or e-mail mayalove@hotmail.com.

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First graduates of new curriculum that eschews ancient rituals

By Frank Cimatu and Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

FORT ILL. PLAR, BAGUIO CITY—The Philippine Military Academy has broken many of its century-old traditions in order to modernize and this year's batch of graduates was the first to reap the benefits of those values, but superintendent described as a "bold move."

Maj. Gen. Leopoldo Maligalig praised the Mangatarem Class of 2000 was the beneficiary of a modern curriculum that discarded ancient rituals and practices that dare back to the academy's inception 100 years ago.

Maligalig said the comprehensive modernization plan, called "the PMA Roadmap to 2010," would convert the academy into a premier leadership institution in the country.

In his speech to the graduates, Mr. Arroyo said Mangatarem was a 12th century epic poem. She said, "this legend relates the tale of 30 Bornean datus who fled persecution and sought freedom through uncharted seas and shores."

"Today, eight centuries later, through you, the Mangatarem Class, government will bridge the far communities of the land and ensure their sensitivity and freedom," she said.

The Mangatarem reference has drawn criticism from historians, who said the epic may have been a hoax that should no longer be taught in schools.

Dr. Raymundo Beville, dean of the college of social sciences at the University of the Philippines-Baguio, said Mangatarem was a collection of stories that relate how 10 datus escaped the wrath of Sultan Makaramas of Borneo and reached Panay.

Patronage politics

Differing jewels and a golden saber (campilan) that, they claim, purchased the island from Marikudo, the leader of the Atis, and became the ground ancestors of the Visayans, Beville said. "For a President facing a period of instability and a crisis of legitimacy, using historical references can, whether validated or not, in rally people to strengthen your cause, is logical."

He said Ms Arroyo also used values she tried to associate the datus with to the cadets.

"The datu is the cultural root of patronage politics," he said, "because the datu subsidizes the needs of his constituents in order to win their loyalties," Beville said.

Protect republic, GMA tells PMA cadets

From page A1

plain to the graduating class because in her valedictory Mojica, who is joining the Philippine Navy, also talked about it.

"She has a leader's heart. I know you all have a leader's heart."

In a later interview, AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. explained that the Presidential Medal of Merit was awarded to deployment to depressed areas in Metro Manila.

"She's talking about a holistic approach ... than counterinsurgency is the job of everyone. We need multisector problems to pursue until order if we are to develop," Esperon said.

Presidential Saber

Fulfilling one of her most important ceremonial functions as President, Ms Arroyo awarded the Saber, Mr Arroyo conferred the highest honors on the top 10 graduates of the Maragtas Class.

For graduating at the top of her class, the 22-year-old Mojica received the Presidential Saber and the PGMA Achievement Award for Excellence.

She also received the Philippine Navy Sword for being the No. 1 graduating cadet joining the Philippine Navy and the Nursing Unit US Military Advisory Group) Award, which is given to the top graduate joining the three major services of the AFP.

Mojica hails from Indang, Cavite, where a year ago a local Philippine Navy hospital Mr. Arroyo. This time, the President's presence was warmly acknowledged by Mojica.

Two other female cadets, Geralyn Mendoza of San Quirino, Pangasinan, and Shelyn Cassandra of Talisay City, Negros Occ., made it in the Top 10, placing fifth and ninth places, respectively.

Mendoza will join the Air Force, while Canonoo will join the Navy.

The other seven top graduates are Joselle Diego Beltran (Santa Maria, Zamboanga), Arnold Estupigan, Jose Angue, Zamboanga), Emil Leyba (Tabiliq Benguet), Cyrus Angelo Castillo (Mandaluyong City), Lorenzo Lumen (Santiago (Dumaguete City), Reuben Soncho Zare (Naboa, Camarines Sur) and Lemuel Ilan Antonio G (Quezon City).

No. 3 graduate

Had it not been for an unfortunate violation, Beltran would have been the class valedictorian.

Beltran settled for No. 2 instead, although he received the most number of awards—the Vice Presidential Saber from Vice President Noli de Castro, the Philippine Air Force Saber from Air Force chief Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon, the Academic Group Award for being No. 1 in all academic courses, the Management Plaque for being the No. 1 cadet in all courses offered by the Department of Management and the Jaime Award.

Beltran led 21 cadets who graduated with honors (cum laude), but it was Arroyo, a diminutive cadet who was also graduated magna cum laude.

The graduation rites were punctuated by cheers and applause from the cadets' relatives and friends, with the Cagayan delegation loudly exuberant over its 5ft cadets who made it to the big day. They shouted for joy every time a Cagayanon was called on stage to receive medals and the Bachelor of Science degree diploma.

In contrast, Cadet Michael Anderew Pena cast a lonely but proud figure as he made his way to the stage. He was the lone cadet from San Pascual, Masbate.

Ms Arroyo was assisted by Executive, Defense Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane Jr., PMA Superintendent Maligalig, Gen. Esperon, Maligalig and alternately by the three service commanders of the AFP.

'Social payback'

In her speech, Ms Arroyo said the AFP "must be the vanguard of achieving national unity."

"The strength of the peso is boosting social amelioration. We're making headway in the social payback of economic growth. This is the real story making place in the lives of the people," she said.

The President said the continued poverty of a robust economic blueprint and the productivity of Filipinos here and abroad had caught "the eye of investors and political observers who are now seeing a permanent trajectory of economic and political stability."

She said the focus of the world was not only on the Philippine economic recovery but the way the country was making democracy work while keeping the threat of terror at bay.

Ms Arroyo said the passage of the antiterrorism law would "shield not only the people but our economy as well from the scourge of terror."

"I am glad that in his remarks, General Maligalig also talked about the many facets of human security," Ms Arroyo said as she went on to define two major components of human security—freedom from fear and freedom from want.

"This is our formula for enduring peace. You, our young soldiers, will spearhead the fight against terror in the same way that we using proclamation and executive orders are leading the fight against poverty while helping reunite our people," she added.

Meet the Romeros: 3 generations of mistahs

From page A1

graduates since 1993, there have only been two families with genealogical succession involving three generations of PMA graduates.

The second first is 1981 when Natalio Ecarma III, the son of Rodolfo Ecarma of Class 1954 and grandson of Natalio Ecarma Jr. of Class 1922, graduated. It occurred again in 1986 when Rodolfo Ecarma III, the son of Rodolfo Ecarma of Class 1952 and grandnephew of Armando Dumlao of Class 1917, graduated from the PMA. This is only the third instance, with Cadet Romero, that the PMA shall have a third generation graduate.

2nd generation grads

Second generation graduates were more common in the academy.

Estrellado says that there were 116 fathers and sons who graduated from 1906. Given this number, it is safe to assume that there has been one in every batch.

In addition, there were seven families with four siblings who had graduated. The Velayos, Arevalos, Brosoras, Maligalig, Rhodriguez, Villasotos and Valenzuela.

There were also 24 families with three siblings belonging to the long gray line.

The requirement of being in the academy bars one generation to another has been both similar and different in the ways that matter.

Romero II says that during his time in the academy he could not discuss military matters with his father who was in fact already retired.

"It just was not discussed. Maybe it was because he was still a part of the old school," Romero II says.

"I remember writing a letter to my mother one time, telling her about the time I received punishment for an infraction. My father wrote me back to say that I should refrain from writing those kinds of letters to my mother because it put her in tears. From then on, I never wrote about those things again."

Family support

The younger Romero has, as his sons, decided to spare his mother from the details of his difficulties.

"He doesn't discuss those things with us," his mother Bertie says. However, the cadet shares an specially close bond with his parents—for that, he honestly says, helped him during his toughest days in the academy.

"My family has always been there for me and I am able to do not my problems with them openly in the way first two members have [really just wanted to go home. What my parents cannot stop my ambitions into the academy I wanted to just quit and go back to Manila with them," he says.

In the end, his parents gave him the support that he needed to hang on and after his "Bonne Bonne night" days (the two-month period prior to his inauguration into the academy) there was no turning back for him.

"The biggest difficulty is being separated from your loved ones and having hardly any contact with them," he says. At the first year, cellular phones were not allowed and you were only permitted a limited time to use the pay phone to talk to long distance.

"You adjust eventually," Romero adds.

Pressure

He had entered the PMA at the age of 20, after spending two years in the academy of his father. Before he was exploring in Electronics and Communications Engineering.

A life barrier in the academy for a second or third generation cadet?

Estrellado explains that the pressure on the children of cousins have more to do with the pressure getting them more challenges.

"Knowing that I was my father's son really pushed me to do my best because I did not want to let my family down," says Romero.

Atong's plea bargain gets him 6 years in jail

From page A1

nonjail time.

Ang also agreed to return P20 million, his alleged share of the kickbacks he was accused of diverting to a company with relatives.

He pleaded guilty to conspiracy to exploit officials in violation to indirect bribery during his court appearance.

In pleading guilty to the lesser offense, he avoided a possible minimum of up to 40 years—the maximum prison term for plunderers.

Under the plea bargain, Ang also promised to notify Ermita he were to receive "his personal knowledge of."

Ang is the first to be convicted among the accused accused in the 9-year-old plunder case against officials.

Estrada is accused of amassing about P4 billion in payoffs from illegal gambling and tobacco tax kickbacks and commissions. He is on a charged with perjury for allegedly falsely declaring his assets.

Aside from Ang, Estrada's son, Jinggoy, lawyer Edward Serapio, Revenue Sec. Edgardo Espiritu, Deputy Executive Secretary for Legal Affairs Mary Ann Tiu Sy and Atong's brother Alfredo Ang were named as conspirators in the plunder case.

The charge sheet said that of the P130 million in tobacco excise taxes diverted in 1999 from the military of Bonna Inc. P70 million was allegedly given to Estrada, P20 million went to Jinggoy, P20 million to his aide and P10 million to Ang, which he later admitted in the plea bargain agreement.

Presiding Justice Francisco Leonardo-De Castro yesterday whether he gave the amount to a public officer, Ang replied "yes."

Assisted by his lawyers, Alfredo Villamor and Ruth Castelo, Ang also answered "yes" when asked if the public officer accepted the money.

Good enough

Mahadevan welcomed the sentence handed by a special division of the Sandiganbayan.

"Since he pleaded guilty, justice is done," Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Sergio Apostol is not.

AT PMA: Ang talks with jail guards before promulgation of his sentence by the Sandiganbayan on Monday. DAVID DOCUSEN

"That is enough because of the mitigating circumstances," he said.

Ang's admission has strengthened the government's case against the deposed leader, who has been on trial for plunder since he was arrested in 2001, according to Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio.

But Estrada's lawyer, Rufus Rodriguez, said Ang's sentencing would have no effect on the former President's case.

"President Estrada expects an acquittal in his case," he said, adding Ang's admission "is completely false and untrue."

Swollen legs

For most of the duration of the proceedings, Dr Castro allowed Ang to sit on a swivel chair due to his swollen legs.

But before Ang pleaded guilty, Dr. Castro, Associate Justices Peter Peralta Jr. and Diosdado de Peralta took turns in questioning him again on whether he fully understood the plea bargain deal and its consequences.

Every question was examined into. Filipino by a court interpreter as if to make sure that Ang fully comprehended what he was getting into.

"Do you understand that (by pleading guilty) you are subject to payment of civil indemnity?" asked De Castro.

"Meron ho po (Ibinigay) yung kanila," Ang said.

"Do you understand that you have the right to plead not guilty ... and the right not testify against yourself?" De Castro further asked. Ang replied: "Naiintindihan ko po (I understand) your honors."

That you are pleading guilty of your own free will, having threatened by deceit," the justice continued. "Because is threatening me, your honors," Ang said.

"Do you know that the court may ask you to pay the P20 million in cash?" De Castro asked.

Ang, who was slightly caught off guard, said he would find a way to comply with the court's ruling.

In the plea bargain agreement, Ang promised to waive his rights on his forms in opposite Cagayan Gardens in Quezon City to close of the P20 million he promised to return to the government.

Cash payment

The day assigned's court yesterday said Ang must pay it in cash. "We will try to raise the P20 million," Carmelo told reporters after the court adjourned.

Ang's counsel said Ang must pay the P20 million within 15 days, or before the decision becomes final and executory. The court would only consider the motion only after is convicted has been made.

Ang's lawyers also filed yesterday a petition asking the court to put him on probation and grant him temporary liberty after having served five years and four months in jail. With a report from Cathie Lathop Jocelyn and AP

Court orders arrest of Inquirer editors Mike A sued for libel

From page A1

those by Jose Miguel Arroyo, husband of the President.

Editors from Tolfo, ordered arrested by Judge Virgilio Alabado of Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 10 were business publisher and Inquirer Number, editor in chief Letty Jimenez Magsanoc, managing editor Joaquin Henson, associate editor Abraham Abadeo Chanday, associate editor for readership Ricardo Gonzalvez, news editor Artemio Engquig, opinion editor Jorge Bocobo, national editor Prospero Sandoval Jr. and senior desk editor Ana Marie Pamintuan Jr.

The case involves the March 15 issue of the Inquirer which carried a story by columnist Ric Saludo saying that there were 130 billion and nine other pesos unaccounted for in the President's Social Fund.

Lawyer Rey Bocking, the branch clerk of court, said copies of the warrants had been delivered to the Philippine National Police.

Tolfo said the issuance of the warrant of arrest came as a surprise to the Inquirer editors. It was unclear what they did not have time to quote had, he said. He added that he expected had to be posted for Tolfo and the case to be dismissed.

The multimillion-peso libel suit filed by Arroyo last year stemmed from several articles written by Tolfo which exposed the alleged smuggling activities of Dicky Ilo and his brother. Ilo had been economically linked to Arroyo.

Tolfo claimed that the President's husband was behind the cancellation of his and his brother's duty and freedom's radio television program "Usapang Negosyo Brothers," on the government-owned and controlled IBC-13.

Arroyo denied the allegations. He said that Tolfo's articles, which were published with actual malice, "injured and exposed him to public hatred, contempt and ridicule."

Tolfo claimed that the President's husband was behind the cancellation of his and his brother's duty and freedom's radio television program "Usapang Negosyo Brothers," on the government-owned and controlled IBC-13.

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Helps Negros tillers, bishops, others urge GMA

By TJ Burgonio

A SECTORAL group led by bishops has asked Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to intervene and place 120 farmers in the land awarded to them in a Negros Occidental sugar plantation, allied the Department of Agrarian Reform and, reportedly linked to land-grabbers.

Archbishop Antonio Ledesma asked Mr Arroyo in a March 16 letter to "take personal charge" in the installation of the 120 beneficiaries of a 144-hectare portion of Hacienda Yulo Holdings in La Castellana town.

In a paid ad scheduled to run today, Ledesma, Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, Archbishop Ramon Arguelles and others appealed to the President to order the immediate installation of the farmers, if only to end the hunger strike some of them are on.

The bishops, the president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, said the bishops were "deeply concerned" about the hunger strike that was sparked by the "impasse" in their installation in the hacienda, originally owned by Roberto Ongpin.

To protest the denial of installation, some beneficiaries picketed camp outside the DAR office in Quezon City earlier. Some are on standby in the event the day After Secretary Nasser Pangandaman failed to install them yet again on March 8, they vowed to fast to the death.

Pangandaman called off the installation, he said, on pressure exerted by a rival farmers' group led by Leonardo Montañez in the plantation.

In the ad, the signatories also asked the President to replace Pangandaman with someone "capable of doing the best job of a DAR secretary."

"The Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program is a flagship assistance program. President Arroyo should assure the Filipino farmers that CARP is still a priority program of her administration, and that they still have hope under this program," they said.

Signatories included Representatives Rina Bonifacio, Racquel, Mario Aguja, Rita Baraso, Lorenzo Tañada III, Mujiv Hataman and Joel Villanueva, singer Gary Granada, filmmaker Eros Cavaliso and Mounted.

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Court reinstates Sanchez

THE COURT OF APPEALS has nullified the preventive suspension order issued by the Ombudsman against Batangas Gov. Armando Sanchez in relation to allegations of anomalies in the provincial government's real property tax computerization project.

In permanently stopping the government from enforcing the September 2005 six-month preventive suspension, the appellate court said the Ombudsman abused his discretion when it directed Sanchez to immediately leave office.

But it said its decision was without prejudice to the continuation of the administrative case against Sanchez.

"There being a clear showing that respondent Office of the Ombudsman gravely abused its discretion in issuing the assailed 28 September 2005 preventive suspension order against petitioner Governor Armando C. Sanchez, the same is hereby declared null and void," the court said.

The appellate court noted that very few preventive suspension orders were invoked. Atilla B. Macaraeg and Marlon Ramos, lawyer Sanchez, said

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Satur taken for a ride

DAYAN Photo party-list Rep. Satur Ocampo gives a statement to the media at the Western Police District headquarters in Pa shortly before being whisked to the airport for an early morning flight to Cagayan.

From page A1

granted that the Supreme Court had yet to issue on Friday (March 23) his petition filed, bringing the legality of his arrest in

At one point during the 1.5 hour drama, or inadvertently, police officials asked Ocampo to put on a bullet-proof vest, for his own safety, as they walked for the Cessna to take off from the Manila domestic airport for Tuguegarao City.

"I rejected it," Ocampo recounted. "I told them: Who will shoot me? You are all here."

The authorities gave varying reasons for why the plane turned around: this trip—it's the second in two days—was due to bad weather. The police said it was because they had finally received a copy of the judge's order allowing Ocampo to remain in Manila.

The seemingly bewildered manner in which Ocampo was taken to the airport coincided with growing international criticism about the excesses of security forces in dealing with political opponents.

Ocampo was arrested Friday on charges of involvement in the alleged killings by communist rebels of suspected military agent in Leyte 22 years ago. At the time, Ocampo said, he was a prisoner of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

With Ocampo on the flight were his wife, retired University of the Philippines professor Carolina Malay, and fellow Bayan Muna Rep. Teddy Casiño. The plane took off around noon and landed back in Manila at about 2:30 p.m.

Earlier, at about 3 a.m., Ocampo was abruptly awakened in his detention room at the headquarters of the Manila Police District's (MPD) General Assignment Section and told he was being flown to Leyte.

'Dark lords'

"What they told me was they were nothing me because I needed to be at the airport by 4 a.m. to catch a 6 a.m. flight ... This was a cloak-and-dagger operation," said Ocampo.

"The important question here is who are the dark lords behind this? Is it the Cabinet cluster committee on internal security? Is it the classified security adviser? Is it the chief of the DND [Department of National Defense], or is it Pandong [Bacaguiran] himself?" he said.

Ocampo ordered being taken to the airport and had to be bodily carried into another car.

As the police struggled with him before television cameras and a mob of media people, Ocampo addressed his body to persons then showing him inside the vehicle.

Ocampo demanded that his transfer to Leyte—supposed to be a routine process of the arrest warrant against him—be deferred until the Supreme Court had settled the petition pending his case.

Ocampo, Commander Ilary of the Philippines founder Jose Ma. Sison and about 50 others have been charged with multiple murder following the discovery of 67 skeletal remains in caves.

"This is persecution ... I am being taken against my will," he said as he shed to avoid all the police scrambling him away from media people at the police headquarters.

A Chavez supporter or sympathizer the police.

"He has done nothing wrong," the lawmaker shouted.

At the airport, the media people were initially given the impression that Ocampo would be taken to Tacloban in one of two police helicopters.

But the helicopters took off without him.

An hour later, news broke that the Leyte court had ordered the police to hold Ocampo's transfer until after the Supreme Court hearing on Friday.

The convoy of media people started to drive away, investigating the police would heed the judge's order and take Ocampo back to MPD headquarters.

That's were it hesitated.

Silliman starts enabling it, the police are carrying the Ocampos had slipped away and on, used the luggage when the Cessna was waiting.

Police officials justified their decision to fly Ocampo to Leyte by saying that they had not received a copy of the judge's order.

Later, Philippine National Police Director General Oscar Calderon said the PNP received through fax a copy of the court order instructing the authorities to keep Ocampo in Manila.

"I called the airplane to return," Calderon said.

PNP spokesperson Chief Supt. Samuel Pagdilao said the court order had awaited to be "verified and authenticated."

"Obviously, the PNP was under pressure to bring me to court," Ocampo later said. "But the judge's order was for me to stay put in Manila until March 23."

Casiño said: "We just went for a ride and wasted fuel."

The rebel spokesperson on the Cessna were Bayan Rep. Edward Sierra and a police escort.

An early bird

Calderon said the police were duty-bound to prevent Ocampo before Judge Alexander's court.

"If Manila[ns], we will be charged for inaction," he said.

Seeking to clarify the police attempt to fly Ocampo out, Calderon said: "We notified the head supt [of Manila's order] and even the head supt wondered how he validated."

Ocampo left for detention after Judge Manalo agreed to work early.

The appearance that Judge Alexander's office was empty in the morning (he was already there at 8 a.m. but filed our petition and he granted our request," Ocampo told reporters.

In the Leyte town of Abuyog, where the alleged agitator Ocampo had been killed before Manalo's court, about 30 people gathered in agony anti-planarin waiting "farewell" and "Sana dumayo [dreams]."

A man who had been seen in a military camera before killing declined, talking about, "What will you do when you are here?"

The crowd, including relatives of those killed in the alleged communist purge in the 1980s, shouted back: "We should be punished."

In Tacloban itself, pro- and anti-Ocampo groups engaged in a shouting m outside the airport where they had gathered believing that Ocampo would arr

The demonstrators were from Ka pa's Bayan Muna party-list group and environmentalist alliance of fisherm and Kalikasan (Nature).

Amid unfolded rebuttles of the an purge claims.

One side carried placards sta "Free Satur, Dan GMA" and "Stop pa ral repression."

The signs on the other side read: " come home to Hilongos jail" and "S heritage up. [Butcher of] Leyte." W expect from fellow Bicolno, Mrs. Jo Jose Avenia, Jerry Collores and Ely Bergante, Inquirer Visayas

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Son cries but others are just plain

From page A1

nonsense Simeonski Lantheza, sister of evenors Joel Lumangan and Carlton Ilgan Jr. Ilgan, Ang Ladlad president Danton Remoto, Jeanette Bobe Rodriguez, Haley Pesque and Lenia Esposito, and members of the Association of Major Religious Superiors in the Philippines.

"We have to give the justice system because he deserves justice!" former Sen. President Jinggoy Estrada told the gathering.

Reelectionist senators infuriated

Out on the campaign trail, reelectionist senators were infuriated by the stronger administration's disability to protect its troops.

Senator President Manuel Villar said he was shocked by the PNP's audacity in forcing Ocampo's transfer to Leyte against the court's advice.

"It's a crime for someone—the terror of our authorities for 22 years of ruling what," said Villar, who interrupted his campaign to denounce the government's handling of the party-list congressman.

Make a stand

Villar said what was done to Ocampo could be done to other perceived dissidents.

"That is dishearteningly and scary because in the future this might also be done to us," Villar continued. "We should make a stand. While we understand that anyone who commits a crime should be punished, everyone has rights, too, and we should protect their rights as well, whether it's his front or nationalists," he said.

Another senator, Panfilo Lacson, said he was "dismayed and angered by the administration's short-circuiting of procedures in forcibly bringing Mr. Satur to Leyte in complete disregard of the court."

Lacson decried the administration's defiance of the order of Leyte Judge Ephraim Alminde, deferring Ocampo's transfer on the flimsy excuse that the PNP had not received the judge's written order.

Lacson said it was clear that the administration was "hell-bent on harassing and intimidating members of the legitimate opposition" to ensure the "survival of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's regime as mind desperate moves proceeding to the 14th Congress."

In a statement, Sen. Aquilino Pimentel condemned "the Ocampo treatment" of Ocampo by the police.

Persecution prove vote-getter

Sens. Sen. Ralph Recto, a Team Unity senatorial candidate, was appalled by the government's action.

"Satur Ocampo is not a flight risk, for nothing on politics to go abroad or underground. To throw it no reason that his travel is dangerous to Leyte to throw a fit him sit," said Recto in a statement.

He said the government's action had actually backfired.

"If I were the government, I would go easy on Satur, because if his aim of arresting him is to prevent him from resuming to Congress, then reverse development, may have just guaranteed the opposite. Persecution is a proven vote-getter," Recto said. (See related story on Page A2.)

UP law professor

At Club Filipino, Vicky Ocampo, a professor at the University of the Philippines College of Law and a namesake of the Tudaloy Cadre, ong," warned that what happened to Ocampo could befall others in the human rights movement and progressive organizations.

"Sense of an an attempted torture on environmental law," she said. "I never thought we would experience it were in our lifetime. If we don't resist us and band together, tonight for us, third duration," Ocampo said.

Binay, Escudero, Pimentel

Makati mayor Jejomar Binay of the opposition United Nationalist Alliance (UNA) said the Ocampo case "is full and horrible. Simple, a secret for long before you yourself among those being charged."

Makati may suspended Binay in Oc last year based on a complaint filed by a deputy had publicly criticized the city's plan to build 1,000 "slum complexes" Binay's son is also under questioning the suspension order.

"Satur here to fight for the end of democracy," Binay told Ocampo's supporters who included of nationalist candidates in the Makati—such Agatha "Tuka" Bautista.

Escudero left soon after the "photo with Binay, San Juan Mayor Jose Ejercito and Representative Rodolfo Estrada, Rafael Mariano of Surigao and Gilbert Remulla of Cavite.

Tabada

Former Sen. Wigberto Tañada denounced the situation by which the government implicated Ocampo in the 1980 "burgling" of suspected government in Leyte 22 years ago and worked to the issuance of an arrest warrant until lawmaker was eventually arrested.

"This is not the way to strengthen democracy and freedom," Tañada said. "It is not the way to peace, to justice and to all wake up because what's happening to our friends may also happen to us."

Radical solutions to global warming po

From page A1

In the book, mice had infested the south of a town developing. Gorbie king brought in native cat to rid of the rats. Then the mice was saved us with rats, so he brought in dogs to get rid of them, then lions to get rid of the dogs, elephants to get rid of the lions, until finally the dogs killed the elephants.

"But scenario in "The King, the Mice and the Cheese," by Nancy and Eric Carney should give scientists pause before taking recent measures to tune with Mother Nature, says Director of the University of Nevada.

In recent decades, however, several scientists have been considering doing just that.

Far-fetched solutions

"They are exploring global warming solutions that are unquestionably far-fetched, including pipe artificial "trees" that will filter out last dioxide out of the air, a blanket "solar shade" around by a million flying saucers that will lower Earth's temperature, and a scheme that instruct volcanoes by spewing light-reflecting sulfates high in the sky.

"Some are costly projects of late scientists—in case Earth's citizens do not cut back fast enough on greenhouse gas emissions—and the worst of the climate predictions appear not to be away.

Unfortunately the solutions could cause problems of their own—beyond their exorbitant price tags. Seeding clouds with salt particles to reflect away the sun and the Middle East even drier and polluting the air enough to increase respiratory illnesses.

Ayear, Trenberth, climate analysis chief at the US National Center for Atmospheric Research, said scientists should deliberately tampered Earth's climate machine lightly.

So, according to Trenberth, it is foolish to think that people can tune the climate with a few drastic measures.

But as Trenberth's research center, climate scientist Tom Wigley is exploring the most extreme idea.

"It's the home of one with here (the other being doing nothing)," Wigley said. "Whatever we do, there are bad consequences, but you have to judge the relative badness of all the consequences."

Studying the concept of how volcanic pollutants could lower global warming, the Earth was slightly cooler after the eruption of Mount Pinatubo in the Philippines 16 years ago—was brought to the forefront of scientific debate last month when Trenberth, another Nobel Chemistry

"It was meant to search the polluting

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ers," said Cramton, of Germany's Potsdam Institute for Climatology. Wigley's idea is to inject tiny sulfate aerosol particles into the stratosphere, there to rise and, theoretically, reflect away the sunrays that first entered in 1960.

Trenberth worried that the hopes of a quick solution will be to global warming would prove problematic and the public from making real energy sacrifices that they say need to slow climate change.

Not a substitute

David Keith, a University of Calgary engineering professor and one of the scientists exploring geoengineering, said that he is against the idea of using technological solutions tinkering with the air, water and land to fight any possible, that should not be a substitute for cutting emissions just because "we've been politically-weak-kneed."

Instead, he said, such options should be researched as an "insurance policy" against global warming in years worse than forecast. And he is against the idea of using those scientists to talk about the "moral hazard" of geoengineering as an excuse.

There is also a chance that disas-

Palace hand seen in Ocampo snafu

From page A1

The officials asked not to be identified because of the sensitive nature of their positions in the government.

The date of the closed-door meeting could not be ascertained. Some sources said the group had met as recently as Friday.

Other Palace insiders said the group also met about three weeks ago, or before a Leyte judge issued the order for Ocampo's arrest.

The Army claimed the murders were committed 22 years ago. The skeletal remains were found in August last year.

A Palace official said privy to the closed-door discussions said among those present at the latest meeting were Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzalez, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, Defense Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane, Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno and Solicitor General Agnes Devanadera.

Puno opposed

There was initial opposition from Puno to the transfer of Ocampo, according to the Palace official.

The official said Puno had warned that moving Ocampo to Leyte could be used by the Left to gain publicity mileage and by Ocampo's party-list group, Bayan Muna, to attract more votes in the coming elections.

Those opposed to the transfer were overruled.

It was at that meeting that the decision to move Ocampo to Leyte was taken, said the official.

Those who pushed for Ocampo's transfer were Ermita, Devanadera, Raul Gonzalez and Norberto Gonzalez, a member of the Partido Demokratiko Sosyalismo ng Pilipinas (PDSP), according to one of the officials. The PDSP espouses an ideology common to that of Ocampo's group.

But Defense Secretary Ebdane maintained neutrality and the decision to transfer Ocampo was unanimous and there was no dissenting opinion during the closed meeting.

"It was a discussion on the role of law," said Venerucion, speaking in behalf of Puno.

Venerucion said the decision to move Ocampo was already discussed in the Cabinet, but only because the officials wanted to determine which agency should handle Ocampo's case.

Malacañang yesterday denied it had a hand in the case, but defended the filing of murder charges against Ocampo, saying the police and the army were observing the process.

A former Cabinet official contacted by groups supportive of Ocampo said the decision in the Cabinet was whether or not to detain Ocampo in Leyte municipality.

The ex-Cabinet member said Puno was among those opposed to pushing the murder cases against Ocampo and other leftist leaders, including self-confessed communist leader Jose Ma. Sison.

Who owns the plane?

But a Palace source said it was Puno who facilitated the use of the private jet that flew Ocampo and his police escorts to Leyte from Sta.Cruz Manila yesterday.

The jet was owned by Pacific Satellite, a company headed by Puno's brother, Jesse, according to the boys-will-be-boys source.

Another source said top Philippine National Police officials were also against the transfer of Ocampo to Leyte as that would be bad propaganda for the Arroyo administration, which was accused in a recent UN Senate investigation of not doing enough to stop the continuing series of extrajudicial executions of leftist leaders and activists.

Others went along

Another Inquirer informant confirmed there were divisions among Ms Arroyo's advisers on what to do with Ocampo.

"We learned that Raul Gonzalez and Norberto Gonzalez were insistent on the transfer to Leyte," said the informant. "Ebdane and Devanadera went along [also]."

The informant described the Ebdane stance as "manifold" (interest).

Gonzalez told the Inquirer he was informed by PNP Director General Oscar Calderon as early as Sunday night of the impending transfer of Ocampo.

"I don't know," he said when asked whether Ms Arroyo was notified of the decision.

Ocampo, who "claims to be progressive," should undergo the same "persecution" being experienced by ordinary people, insisted Gonzalez.

"The law favors no one," he said.

Raoul Gonzalez, Legal Counsel for Gloria Arroyo, denied Malacañang had ordered Ocampo's transfer to Leyte, saying it was a judicial matter and "the President will not interfere."

Agnes said he did not know who issued the transfer order.

Puno's confirmed that some members of the Cabinet had met over the weekend but disagreed on how to go about the transfer. He said Ms Arroyo had no comment on the case because it was already in the courts.

Gonzalez said no law was violated in the government decision to bring Ocampo to the Leyte court that had ordered the arrest.

"It's part of the process. The justice sector does its end to bring him to where the warrant was issued," he said.

'A big headache'

He said the government was only proving it had the political will to uphold the law.

Even Ocampo's pending petition to the Supreme Court questioning his arrest, Gonzalez said, "Malaki sigo sakit ng ulo nanen dyan (That's really a big headache for us)."

But Ocampo has to face the judge, he said.

Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. defended the decision to fly Ocampo to Leyte in the early hours of Monday.

"Let's not give any color to that," Esperon said in Filipino. "Isn't it good na eto things only rather than later? As a responsible congressman or a high official, he should answer the charges since there is a warrant of arrest. [not for him]," he stressed. With reports from Michael Lim Ubac and Ador L. Saculles

n mad

The solidarity movement is set to hold a nationwide protest action tomorrow to further generate support for Ocampo's petition during the oral arguments before the Supreme Court on Friday.

Ocampo's camp had filed a petition to enjoin the arrest and detention against the arrest warrant issued by Leyte Judge Abando.

Cripple Bohran

One supporter from the University of the Philippines suggested that the new movement put up protests demanding the release of Ocampo and fellow party-list Rep. Crispin Beltran in schools, churches, hospitals and offices.

Like Ocampo, Beltran, who is detained at the Philippine Heart Center on rebellion charges, was seen by supporters as a victim of political expression.

Supporter urged fellow supporters to also look into the alleged repression in the context of the new antiterrorism law (Human Security Act). "If terror is not a victim under the antiterrorism law, I don't know what you call him."

Ocampo's lawyer, Romeo Capulong, said the government didn't need to worry the Manalo-Aquino because now, noting that the one against terrorism was "severe."

Traveling dialogue

Capulong gave participants a detailed summary of the case against the lawmaker, including the "issue of the security clearance."

The 67 skeletal remains found in Inopacan, Leyte, in August 2006—the basis of the murder charge against the lawmaker—were actually recycled bones earlier found in peripheral areas, according to Capulong.

"In the end, truth and justice will prevail," he said. The political support and action are strong on the side of the aggrieved party," 1000s reports from GEC Cebu organ Jr and Rosa Pamilagan

ose bigger risks

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Vol. 33 No. 192

Still in denial

EDITORIAL

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO THE OTHER day said that she remained unperturbed by criticisms from some US officials and lawmakers about the extrajudicial killings and lowered to keep her focus on the country's "plus points."

In a speech at the inauguration of the Subpan Bridge in Apalit, Pampanga, she said that the Philippines was "keeping pace with the world in all aspects of economic and political stability, shoring up the welfare of the people, expanding democratic space and hitting hard on the terrorists. "Political issues were for Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye to answer," she added.

The President's latest statements indicate that she, like her favorite Cabinet members and top generals, continues to be in denial on the issue of extrajudicial killings. Except for some general statements that she was acting on the matter, the President has not done anything concrete to put a stop to the political killings.

She was perturbed enough by judicial or court-ordered executions or pardy for a measure abolishing the death penalty but she remains unperturbed by the rising number of political killings. The running total is 834 by the militants' count and 286 by the human court. Pressure from various sources, including the European Union, the United States, Canada and the UN Special Rapporteur, have not prompted the President to take stronger measures to put a stop to the killings.

The President says she would rather focus on the "plus points" like fiscal discipline, productivity and excellence and foreign investments. But are these the most important things in a nation's life? Is not life the most important and most precious thing? Should not the unjust and unjustified taking of even one human life be a cause of concern in the leader of a supposedly civilized, Christian nation?

The President said "political issues" were for her spokespersons to answer, and obviously she considers the matter of extrajudicial killings a political issue. She will not take questions about this. But as President of the country, she has the overall responsibility to attend to all its problems—economic, political, social, security, etc. She cannot sweep the issue of extrajudicial killings under the rug and pretend that the problem does not exist.

Ironically, the President said in her latest statement that the Philippines is "expanding democratic space." What is she talking about? Every year, every month, every week, democratic space is being constricted by the increasingly repressive Arroyo administration which is now being compared with the Marcos dictatorship to degree of repressiveness.

Were it not for an assertive and right-thinking Supreme Court, the nation would have lost a great part of its "democratic space" in the last two years of the Arroyo administration. It is a good thing that the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the people and of human rights when it struck down Proclamation 1017 placing the country under a state of national emergency, the subsequent preemptive response and Executive Order 464 which banned executive officials from appearing before the committees of the Senate and the House.

How can democratic space be said to be "expanding," when people—leftists, militants and activists—are being killed for holding progressive, pro-people views? The framers of the 1987 Constitution precisely included a provision on party-list groups to encourage leftist militants to go above ground and to wage their struggle in the legislature.

During the Cimatron Aquino and succeeding administrations, the party-list groups flourished but now the repressive Arroyo administration would turn back the hands of the political clock and bring back the Marcos era which saw the arrest, persecution, torture, involuntary disappearances and killings of hundreds of militants. Expanding democratic space, indeed!

Focus on the "plus points," particularly advances to the economy. This is fine for everybody; we need to give big push to our economy which has lagged behind most of the Asian countries. But while attending to the economy, the President should not lose sense of the problems in the heads of certain people, like the generals. She has to assert civilian supremacy. She has to rein in the generals and put a stop to the extrajudicial killings which have been blamed mostly on the military by almost every reputable organization, including the Melo Commission which she appointed. Or is she President still to control?

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'Burnt men'

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

GUIMBAras—"SEE YOU WRITING ABOUT the oil spill's aftermath in Guimaras mangoes," a friend asked us over a forty-pumpboat. One of 321 that ply Iloilo waters, towered for this island 'population: 161,456). "Neither," I said, and we laughed.

For the weekend, the wife and I watched off our cell phones, laptop, headlines, politicians, pundits, rice. "Come under to a quiet place and rest a while" remains time-tested counsel. And Our Lady of the Philippines abbey in Guimaras fits the bill.

But is a Cistercian of the Strict Observance monastery. Thus is an 11th century order of monks who devote their lives to work, prayer and study, mostly in silence. Reforms at La Trappe, France in the 16th century saw them dubbed as "Trappists."

Pedaling to court of tranquera, guavas and pineapples along the road to San Miguel, the driver said, "Planted by the Trappists who preserve the harvest."

Buzz also grow rice and vegetables for their use—and guests'. Their guesthouse runs self-service rollers jams and cookies. "You are really a monk if you live from the work of your hands," the Rule of St. Benedict says.

In 1972, Sen. Ossie Ledesma gave a 30-plus hectare land to the Trappists from the United States. The late Joey Ledesma served as city mayor, commerce secretary and ambassador to the UN. Yet, he kept his multiple charities away from abbey affairs. "The perfect gentleman," said Lourdes Ledesma who escort given to idle gossip.

But did an English literature class speak there rains here? I wondered as one car drove into the abbey. Tall trees planted by the monks now line or where once there was only an orchard.

"Put aside 'Macbeth' for now, gentlemen," cut Jesuit reader Joseph Hart, beyond the campus of Ateneo's Our Lady of Guadalupean monastery. They were excerpts from "Seven Storey Mountain," written by Columbia Univer-

sity professor Thomas Merton. The book, at that time, led The New York Times' top 10 list.

Merton observed years that little seen outdoors of a Trappist monastery, including the chanting of the Divine Office by white-cowled monks at 2:00 a.m. (The monks retire at 7:45 p.m.) The points of the same men working the land, scratched by the sun, in silence.

In Guimaras, anybody so minded can slip into the church to pre-dawn darkness and listen to "Lumen Christi" in English plain chant. "This day sun was dead and is alive again. He was lost and is found."

Merton wrote that from the visitors' pews. Years later as Father Louis, he walks the leader in his book "The Sign of Jonah" through the midnight "Fire Watch." This is a nightly inspection against fires, from dank cellar to smoldering belfry.

"The monastery's sun lost in the all-absorbing silence and solitude of the fields," Merton wrote. "I stopped into the smooth coast and listened to the silence that enfolded me and spoke louder than any voice."

"In the dark church," he continued, Mass was beginning at many side altars, curve of dim candle lights... What a thing Mass becomes in hands has denied by gnawing sacrificial labor in poverty... Fame gold fire flashed from the shadowy flanks of upturned chalices."

Hidden in the anonymity of their cowls, these men have been themselves and by [silent] who will never know them on earth," Merton recalled the contemplative vocation. "This holds the nation together... They win for it the grace of God."

What drives such men to solitude, gruelling labor and prayer?

There are 28 monks in Guimaras—from Switzerland, Brazil, Cuba and Leyte. Yet, the mission life attracts others. "There is the vocation of transcending union," a monk explains.

This is different. Seven Trappists massacred in 1996 by the Armed Islamic Group in the now-abandoned Our Lady of Atlas Monastery in Algeria may give some light. "I do not desire this death," explained the abbot. Fr. Christian de Cherge, a letter opened after the killings. "For I should like, when the time comes, to have a space of lucidity ... to forgive with all my heart the one who will strike me down."

Father de Cherge addressed his killer as "my last unknown friend." He wrote: "[You] would not have known what you were doing. So, for you, too, I say this thank you and commend you to the God in whose face I see yours. May we find each other, happy 'good thieves' in paradise, if it pleases God, the Father of us both."

Cardinal Philippe Barbarin, archbishop of Lyon, France, has "Trappist saints" in Tibhirine, Spain, Algeria and Poland are now learning the language. They plan to open Our Lady of Atlas monastery.

Sunday evening, a bruise whisks a handful of story bougainvillea petals across the tented courtyard to church floor. In their white cowls, the monks bow and chant vespers. The hermit reads an excerpt from "Introit of Contemplation," written by Merton before his death in Bangkok while studying Asian monasticism.

"Your solitude will lose number in the multitude of men you will never see on earth. That they may learn to know the Christ of the hearts men?—whether in Algeria, Japan, Kentucky or Guimaras.

(Email: juanlmercado@gmail.com)

The outlaw

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

HERMOGENES ESPERON IS HAPPY THAT Isaac Dominguez has been arrested by the police and seems to go even further. He seems the Communist Party of the Philippines enthroned all over again. The Anti-Subversion Law, which deemed the CPP an outlaw organization, was laid to rest in 1992, making it possible for members, ex or current, real or imagined, to go about their daily business without fear of arrest so long as they are not carrying firearms or inciting others to rebellion. Supervisions that have been affirmed by many commissions, ex or current, still continued as tagged on by the AFP to be arrested on sight for being terrorists.

If this is done, he says, they can reduce the rebel strength, currently estimated by the AFP at 7,000, by half. The insurgency, he boasts, will have become irrelevant by the time GMA leaves in 2010.

It's another display of what government officials, civilian or military, real or imagined, are fast developing a talent for, which is idiocy in the very least, what is wrong with it is that. She Northern Luzon insurgency has continued to current, still continued as tagged on by the AFP to be arrested on sight for being terrorists.

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On being 100

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cuenavan

A MEMBER OF EUROPEAN ROYAL IS IN TOWN to solve a program that would hook up the country deeper into the global intellectual circuit for the development of "a culture of peace and development in a globalized world." Prince Alfred of Liechtenstein, who is chair, CEO and board member of various companies engaged in engineering, investment, trading, banking and consultancy, also chairs the Board of Trustees of the Vienna-based International Peace Institute (IPI). Last Friday, he humbled in Makati the first Asian-wide event series, called "Bridges: Dialogues Toward a Culture of Peace," which IPI is launching in Asia, starting with the Philippines, Manila alone from November up to April next year. The guest list was a virtual who's who in the local arbitration and NGO fields.

* * *

Over a 6-month period IPI's continuing dialogue will bring to Manila about 21 Nobel Laureates in the fields of Economics, Peace, Physics, Chemistry and Medicine. It should be a medically controlling interaction with leading educational institutions across the country as well as the departments of Foreign Affairs and Science and Technology. IPI has carried out more than 700 programs in education in Europe. Recently it helped Timor-Leste, which is the youngest nation in Southeast, presided over by Queen Sirikit and Princess Maxthtom. For the IPI program, President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, who received the Prince of the Order of Leadership for Peace, offered to host it this year for the four nations in Southeast, her field, namely professors from Holland of the University of California in Ala. Barbara and Robert Mundell of Columbia University, and said perhaps some functions could even be held there.

* * *

The affable party tall-sporting royal, who went to Manila the same day having first Indonesia and Taiwan, offered gifted him with when he first came during the Ramos presidency, but he turned down the invite words for his kind ambition. He said, with a smile, that he dreamed not too long ago that God had called him to His home and asked him what he would like to do. He said he told God he would like to be computers and engaging to reach 100, as well as marrying the girl he met in Manila. God said, okay, so what else? Nothing his brains. Alfred then said that surely he has invested in computing for the next 100 years. God said, okay, so what else? Alfred then said he would be found in the world and God body one to smile. The one when he woke up and realized that ultimately caring for one's fellowmen, being responsive to the things of the spirit and seeking for peace in the world are what truly matters.

* * *

As he turned 75 last Sunday, former President Ramos set on his "last goal" to live up to 100 years. I know those envious FVR must feel. Just a few days ago my uncle, engineer Carlos Olivares Reyneya, celebrated his 100th birthday at an Ortigas hotel ballroom and with more such a grand feeling even for the centenarian. His Carlito is the first among his late father Luis Olivares Sr., and they were both very handsome and close to each other may be that stayed with their friends while studying law in the Ateneo. The centenarian had a great celebration with his nine children, all successful professionals, and their spouses, 23 grandchildren and 9 great grandchildren (his wife, the former Felicitas Bautista, passed away 11 years ago) and relatives, friends, colleagues and other proteges.

The Carlito now moves about in a wheelchair, though he is helped to take short walks on his limbs won't atrophy. But his memory remains phenomenal. At the party, he called out relatives he hadn't seen for a long time, jumping to especially on Peter Secretary Ignacio Bunye, "son of my beloved cousin, National Prosecutor Director Alberto Bunye, a good man." Sis Alchimert's daughter Ma. Victoria, an Ateneo Lawyer Palmera Bermejo-Papa pointed out, is that he always solved mathematical problems the long way and never with calculators, and even in his advanced years he always worked on crossword puzzles. His attitude to life also helped, until recent years, counting his birthday celebrations, he saw to it that he danced with all the ladies.

* * *

Tio Carlito was a civil engineering graduate of UP and Mapua and a board topnotcher when World War II erupted. He enlisted in Bataan as captain in the USAFFE Corps of Engineers and after its fall, he was captured by the Japanese. Sheated with bare feet, he survived the 30-km Death March from Bataan to Capas, Tarlac, and was then taken to where the survivors were loaded onto wagons "to gether with the horses" and brought to Capas for night months in the concentration camp.

When the war ended, my father and Tio Carlito's brother, Luis Sr., went to Capas to look for him and found him emaciated but very much alive. He was to recover his health. Later he spent many fruitful years as a cooking official of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, free of controversy or anomalies. He was honorable all the time. With his 60P00 salary and income from teaching at Adamson University and a couple and Hugh Mendez, Tio Carlito managed to educate all his children... down to the last one, Ma. Victoria, a nurse, banker, and business administration graduate, and a 1986 graduate who became a one-star army general.

* * *

At the party, Tio Carlito enjoyed the film on his life lovingly put together by his children and grandchildren. When he took the microphone, he revealed that when he was very young, he asked his mother, Isabelle Olivares Reyneya, what he should be when he grows up. She said to be a priest. He said he was a priest for a while in Sta. Ana, Pampanga, but he left the priesthood and became a civil engineer instead. He was married to Felicitas for 70 years, and they were both very handsome and close to each other may be that stayed with their friends while studying law in the Ateneo. The centenarian had a great celebration with his nine children, all successful professionals, and their spouses, 23 grandchildren and 9 great grandchildren (his wife, the former Felicitas Bautista, passed away 11 years ago) and relatives, friends, colleagues and other proteges.

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Military deployment in non-conflict areas an old, martial-law strategy

THE DEPLOYMENT OF MILITARY TROOPS in urban poor communities, where they are repeatedly harassing supporters of "leftist" party-list groups, is more than just an issue of decision-making. It is in fact a disturbing indication that the Armed Forces of the Philippines is usurping the civilian functions of government. It is "militarizing" politics. It is an outright violation of the constitutional principle of civilian supremacy over the military. It is gradually being done the foundations by the military's intervention in all aspects of public life. It is, in fact, a veiled attempt to institute a de facto martial rule. It is a very reminiscent of the dark years of martial law.

AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon said that the deployment is part of AFP's campaign to contain, among others, drug abuse in the targeted communities. The question is: Why should the military be concerned about "policing" civilian communities? That is the function of the Philippine National Police and barangay officials. Are we to understand that there is a breakdown of public order such that civilian authority can no longer function and there is a need to call in military troops to do police work?

Esperon also paints in a manner the need for the military to stop groups which are always on the streets. Who are the groups to be involving in? The progressive and militant groups involved in street protests? If so, where did exercising the constitutional right to freedom of assembly and speech become a military problem? When did being an activist or a supporter of activist organizations become a criminal act?

Whatever he says, Esperon cannot hide the glaring truth that the military operations in non-conflict areas are a calculated strategy designed to sow fear and terror among the civilian populace and keep the Arroyo administration in power. The strategy has been in the works since 2005, and was more evident in several hotspots in Mindanao and Southern Luzon—during the time of Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan as the regional army commander of Region IV—to the days' notice, in this particular case, there was none.

Considering the inconvenience (almost seven months now) and hostilities that is having on electricity, it would be foolish for anyone not to pay P2,360 (exclusive of penalties) for a one-room, unfurnished condo for utility and service? Use a mind.

Because Meralco runs by way of assessment bill deposit, it must not be said that it is being arbitrary/unfair/unreasonable in terminating contracts that thereafter necessitates the renewal/payment of bill deposit.

—THEODORE B. MENDIOLA JR.,
Regency Townhouses,
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Quezon City

LETTERS

Demand based on unlawful contract invalid

THIS IS A REJOINDER TO MY LETTER (Inquirer, 3/13/07) and Meralco's reply (Inquirer, 3/15/07).

1. The exchange of letters between Meralco (Nov. 9, 2006) and the ERC (Dec. 8, 2006) defined the issue in this particular case. Much of what I said was contained in that exchange.

2. There was no understanding that I would settle the required service bill deposit. In fact, in my many letters to Meralco, I made it clear that I considered the contract termination unlawful for it was based on the wrongful accusation that I committed an illegal act. And since the requirement to pay a bill deposit is based on the unlawful contract termination, it follows that the requirement to pay a bill deposit (given this particular circumstance) is invalid.

3. Contract termination requires 30 days' notice. In this particular case, there was none.

Considering the inconvenience (almost seven months now) and hostilities that is having on electricity, it would be foolish for anyone not to pay P2,360 (exclusive of penalties) for a one-room, unfurnished condo for utility and service? Use a mind.

Because Meralco runs by way of assessment bill deposit, it must not be said that it is being arbitrary/unfair/unreasonable in terminating contracts that thereafter necessitates the renewal/payment of bill deposit.

—THEODORE B. MENDIOLA JR.,
Regency Townhouses,
139, Reyes St.,
San Juan City, Manila/B. Serrano Ave.,
Loyola Heights,
Quezon City

A RAYAN/MUNA poster warns against a repetition of alleged poll fraud in 2004.

AFP promotions lent credence to Hello Garci

THE HELLO GARCI TAPE ESCORTEE that Gloria Macapagal Arroyo used wenches of the Commission on Elections, Philippine National Police, and the Armed Forces of the Philippines to manipulate the result of the 2004 presidential elections. Strangely in true GMA fervor of who has confidence, through her actions, in the administration.

The four generals who were mentioned in the "Hello Garci tape" were all promoted to very high positions. The odds that all four would subsequently be appointed to the highest positions, even more than 60 qualified and deserving generals in their organizations, could only have been 1:8 million to one. But this happened. It is hard to be difficult to believe that they were promoted because of their performance and good record.

Why did GMA promote them? To reward them for what they had done for her during the 2004 presidential election? Did DBM stole the presidency, as rumors have it, to fund her ally? The people have the right to know so they can treat GMA's candidacies in the coming 2007 local and national elections accordingly.

—JOSE MACEDA
San Jose,
Antique 5700

If you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Yague St., Makati or send a fax to Nos. 897-4795, 897-4794, or e-mail reader.mail@inquirer.com.ph

Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

Can't ERC initiate power rate review?

IT CONFOUNDS ME WHY THE ENERGY Regulatory Commission, instead of simply waiting for the National Power Corporation to initiate a petition for a rate increase, can initiate an adjustment of Napocor's rates. (Inquirer, 03/12/07) Napocor could send the world, including the United States, do it with their public utilities. In addendum, the cupcake from and the end of purchase power paid to independent power producers (IPPs) are mostly in US dollars and are thus affected by the ex-change rate.

ERC should also adjust Napocor's asset values, which will include those sold after June 2004. Until they are removed, Napocor will continue to earn profit for assets that it no longer owns; and those paid in some from the consumers' payments.

—EDNA ESPOS, edna_espos@yahoo.com
April 14, Windsor Tower, 362 Legaspi St.,
Legaspi Village, Makati City

PORO POINT MANAGEMENT CORPORATION
A Subsidiary of Bases Conversion Development Authority

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
Republic of the Philippines
Upgrading of the San Fernando Airport, Phase I

The Poro Point Management Corporation (PPMC), a subsidiary of the Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA), through the PPMC 2007 Corporate Operating Budget, intends to apply the sum of Four Hundred Seventy Two Million Eighty Three Thousand Six Hundred Twenty Two and 68/100 Pesos (Php 472,083,622.68) being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the Upgrading of the San Fernando Airport, Phase I. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at the opening.

PPMC now calls for the submission of Letters of Intent (LOI) from potential bidders to apply for eligibility for the Upgrading of the San Fernando Airport Phase I. The scope of work to be undertaken shall include but is not limited to the following: furnishing of all batching plant, equipment, machinery, tools, labor materials, transportation and all other items necessary to complete the following:

(a) Construction and strengthening of airfield pavements, including hill removal;
(b) Construction of airport horizontal and vertical structures; and
(c) Electrical works

Bidders should possess a valid PCAB license with Category "AAA" and with Inter-Agency Category of Large "B" for General Engineering (Road, Highway Pavement, Railways, Airport Horizontal Structures and Bridges) and PCAB license with Category "A" and with Inter-Agency Category of Medium "B" for General Building (Building and Industrial Plant).

To be considered eligible and qualified, the prospective bidders should have completed a similar contract with a value of at least fifty percent (50%) of the ABC, and must file other eligibility requirements stated in the Eligibility Documents.

Interested Applicants may obtain further information from the PPMC and inspect the Eligibility Documents at the PPMC Administration Building, Poro Point Special Economic and Freeport Zone, Poro, San Fernando City, La Union from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. on March 20, 2007 to March 26, 2007.

Eligibility Documents shall be issued and made available to interested applicants upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Fifty Thousand Pesos (Php 50,000.00) at the PPMC Administration Building, Poro Point Special Economic and Freeport Zone, Poro, San Fernando City, La Union from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. on March 20, 2007 to March 26, 2007.

Interested applicants shall submit their LOIs together with their accomplished Eligibility Documents to the SBAC at the BCDA Corporate Center, 2/F Bonifacio Technology Center, 31st St., Crescent Park West, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City on or before 9:00 A.M., April 2, 2007. Opening of eligibility documents shall be at 9:30 A.M., April 2, 2007 at the above address in the presence of the prospective Bidders' representatives who choose to attend. Applications for eligibility shall be evaluated using a non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Only those Bidders passing the eligibility check shall be entitled to purchase the Bidding Documents.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted unless otherwise stated, to organizations with at least seventy-five percent (75%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines. In accordance with the IRR-A of R.A. 9184, only Bids from eligible bidders shall be opened. In accordance with the IRR-A of R.A. 9184, a contract shall only be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such during post-qualification.

Interested Eligible Bidders may obtain further information from PPMC and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., April 13, 2007 to April 19, 2007.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Bidders that passed the eligibility check upon presentation of the Notice of Eligibility in the SBAC Secretariat, at the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of One Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php 100,000.00). The Bidding Documents shall be issued and made available at the PPMC Administration Building, Poro Point Special Economic and Freeport Zone, Poro, San Fernando City, La Union from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., on April 13, 2007 to April 19, 2007. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the Bidder or his duly authorized representative.

PPMC shall hold a Pre-Bid Conference and open to all Eligible Bidders on April 20, 2007, 2:00 P.M. at the San Fernando Airport, Terminal Building, Carlatang, San Fernando City, La Union.

Eligible Bidders must submit their Bids to the SBAC at the BCDA Corporate Center, 2/F Bonifacio Technology Center, 31st St., Crescent Park West, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City on or before 9:00 A.M., May 8, 2007. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form and in the amount specified in the Bidding Documents. Late Bids shall not be accepted. Bid opening shall be at 9:30 A.M., May 8, 2007 at the above address in the presence of the Bidder's representatives who choose to attend.

Completion of the Works is required within four hundred five (405) calendar days from the issuance of the Notice to Proceed.

PPMC reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Poro Point Management Corporation
Poro Point Special Economic and Freeport Zone
Poro, City of San Fernando, La Union
Tel. (072) 242-4015
Fax (072) 242-0860
ppmc@edsa.com

(Sgd.) ATTY. ANTHONY C. MANGAHAT
Chairman
Special Bids and Awards Committee

Consumer rights, green choices

WORLD CONSUMER RIGHTS DAY was celebrated last March 15. In the Philippines, where rights are not always fully understood and often taken for granted, a makeover room, day here many people are actually aware of our rights as consumers.

First and foremost, we have the right to basic necessities and services such as food, shelter, jobs, education, healthcare, water, sanitation and public utilities. Our other globally recognized rights are the right to be informed, the right to choose, the right to be heard, the right to redress, the right to consumer education, the right to a healthy and sustainable environment.

The Consumer Act of the Philippines and related laws and ordinances on environment and development seek to protect these rights as well as establish standards of conduct for business and industry.

Along with our constitutional rights, we have parallel responsibilities to be vigilant in asserting these rights, to be critically aware of the price and quality as well as the social and environmental impacts of our choices, and to make consumption or non-consumption decisions to protect the welfare of marginalized sectors and the environment.

In March to raise the economy month, allow me to cite the special role of women, particularly mothers like me, in making consumer choices that are safe for the family's health and for the environment. Using the power of the purse, we can make a huge difference in building nature-loving families and neighborhoods and in helping create a vibrant market for green choices.

Reducing consumption of non-essential stuff, reading product labels for toxic substances, practicing precaution by using natural versus synthetic alternatives, investing in products that are reusable, repairable and recyclable, and using ecological substitutes to plastic carry bags are some of the green choices that we can make.

Lots of simple and practical steps can be added onto the list of green choices. As sure is a finite planet, we invite everyone to be mindful of the effects of our consumption decisions on the capacity of Mother Nature to feed and sustain our present and future generations.

—ORDE CRUZ, RAYA Tan/Florin Coalition's Task Force on Plastics,
Unit 2109, Eagle Court,
26 Emerald St., Quezon City

Senate breeds incompetent pols

IN A RECENT ABNN STORY, Dreamin, 3/6/07) reporter Jerry Esplanada mentioned my opposition to actors entering politics at the national level. But I do not oppose their running for local office—from councilor to governor and even to Congress.

In Congress, there is the necessity to confront and it would have to a congressman to agree for the presidency or vice presidency.

But the Senate is another story. With only 24 senators, to many have feel like the chosen few deserving the highest office of the land, never mind their character flaws and arrogance. The Senate is a breeding ground for incompetent politicians aspiring for the presidency.

An actor running for a local or even a district office is less enough for me. If he/she bungles the job, it is only the constituents who suffer. The damage is confined.

But running for the Senate is another story. Members of senate can affect the welfare of the entire nation. That would be truly regrettable.

According to legislators, actors like Cesar Montano and Tito Sotto might find it hard to get my vote. Not really. While I am aware of and denounced with many senators and candidates because of their backgrounds, smooth behavior, control and mental dishonesty as seen like Montano and Sotto have more chances of getting my vote than Francis Escudero, Loren Legarda and Governor Villar (my home bet). Not Estrada's and a few others whose hypocrisy reaches to the ceiling.

Their stand, attitude, nature and trustworthy do not sit well with me. Knowing their background and their character flaws did not I can well aware of. I will not vote for them...to save this country from them in 2010.

I am for Charter change, for parliamentary system of government of government, all those who oppose these will definitely not get my vote. If I can do it, 10 consistency many more voters to vote my way this coming May elections.

I am just being truthful, real and honest to myself. I am a person who cannot be honest, truthful and real to himself/herself, cannot be real, truthful and honest to the people.

Even if the senatorial candidates I do not like win, I really do not care. For I assure one who asks favors from anyone. I do not need them, neither will I ask favors for favors.

—MANUEL L. MORALES,
manuel@yahoo.com

Across the NATION

Lamppost supplier says there was no overprice

By Jhunnex Magallanes
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—AN EXECUTIVE OF ONE OF THE suppliers of the controversial lampposts installed in three cities in Cebu denied allegations of overpricing.

Barry Pastrana, project director of Subtrak Construction, also instructed that local and regional officials of erstwhile officials did not benefit from the project.

Pastrana said the company might go to court in order to collect the unpaid part of their contract, worth almost P200 million.

"We have to bring that to court, challenging the order of the Ombudsman because we are the aggrieved party in this transaction," he said in a phone interview yesterday.

Pastrana said they were just paid between 10 or 15 percent of the total project cost, and that this amount has been spent.

Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo last Friday issued an order stopping the release of the balance of the contract cost to the two contractors—Subtrak and Ganjob Construction—pending the completion of the Ombudsman's investigation.

Around 1,000 lampposts were installed in the environmental routes from Cebu City, Mandaue City and Lapulapu City during the 11th Sinulog festival. The cost ranged from P80,000 and P120,000 for the decorative lampposts but the rest of the streetlights are with different designs (one-arm, two-arms and three-arms) reportedly cost over P300,000 each.

But in a statement, the two suppliers said they welcomed the investigation since it would "give us the opportunity to clear our names."

A mayor of Naga, Cebu said the lamppost in his town cost only 30,000 each, while businessman Gil Buenaflor said he could supply similar lampposts for P71,000 each.

But Pastrana said the issue was politicized due to the coming elections.

The Department of Environment
ROAD AND HARBOR COMMITTEE
Cebu City, Cebu Zamboanga City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The CITY GOVERNMENT OF ZAMBOANGA invites PHILIPPINE registered suppliers to apply for the following:

Name of Projects	Approved Budget for the Contract	Date/Time Available	Deadline for Submission of Bids	Price of Bid Documents
Cost Estimate	P3,000,000.00	March 01, 2007	March 15, 2007	P10,000.00

The bid documents shall be available at the City Mayor's Office, Procurement, Acquisition and Awards Division, City Hall, Zamboanga City starting March 01, 2007 upon payment of non-refundable bid evaluation amount.

The Pre-bid conference shall be held at City Engineer's Office, Conference Hall, City Hall, Zamboanga City.

The Bidder shall duly sign and enclose the original of the Technical Proposal in one sealed envelope, whereas, the original of the Financial Proposal shall be enclosed in another sealed envelope. Both envelopes shall then be placed in another single envelope, to be not box-labelled at the abovementioned address.

For more information, please call the Procurement, Acquisition and Awards Division at telephone no. (062) 992-7766.

THE CITY GOVERNMENT OF ZAMBOANGA reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

(Sgd.) MARIO D. ARROLA (ENG)
Bids Chairman

(Pub. March 30, 2007)

STUDENTS from different schools in Alaminos City, Pangasinan join a street dancing contest to celebrate the fifth CITY Longganisa Festival on March 11. The city says its longganisa are organic and should be promoted abroad so overseas Filipinos can have a continuous supply of them.

City promotes organic 'longganiza'

ALAMINOS CITY—AUDIE FROM THE Hundred Islands National Park, the resident Pangasinan city has been promoting its organic longganiza (native sausage) through a festival since 2003.

On Saturday, residents gathered in colorful costumes joined the street dancing to depict how the Alaminos longganiza is produced, all aimed at marketing this breakfast fare that goes well with fried rice, egg and coffee.

Festival chair Marivic Fernandez said the Alaminos longganiza differs from the products of other provinces in the variety of sausages to be divided because some voting rely on the mode of processing and the ingredients.

"It is unique because it's the only longganiza in the country with built-in toothpick," said Mayor Hernani Braganza.

He said the product is fully organic and has no artificial preservatives.

The only ingredients added to the longganiza are salt, pepper, soy sauce and bits of garlic, according to Judy Ventura, the biggest longganiza producer in the city.

She said another secret is the use of fresh pig intestines as casing. She said other local producers are already coming here from March to May. She said she could sell up to 150 kilograms a day of longganiza during these months.

Braganza said by promoting the longganiza and increasing the demand for it, the festival is helping farmers in the city who are producing the raw materials.

"But the biggest challenge is to bring it out of the country so Bagong Alaminos living abroad will have a regular supply of the original Alaminos longganiza," he said. Rolando Estoconing, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Bayan Muna house in Iloilo attacked

By Master P Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—MOTORCYCLE-riding persons threw gas lamps in a house here owned by the leaders of the party-list groups in Iloilo province today.

No one was hurt but the impromptu meeting of the two was slightly burned, said Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo in Leyte, the party-list group's representative in Panay.

The gas lamps, made from plastic bottles of mineral water filled with gasoline with a cloth wick, were thrown at around 3 a.m. at the bar in Barangay Sto. Niño Sur in downtown Iloilo City, according to a report of the investigating police.

One of the bombs ignited, burning the roofing while the other fell to the ground.

John Lubada, 25, a Bayan Muna volunteer who was sleeping inside the house, said the suspects sped off on board two motorcycles. He could not identify any of them because of the blackout in the city at dawn until yesterday morning.

The house is co-owned by Maria Luisa Dominado, 51, a former political detainee and spokesperson of the Gerardan ng mga Ex-Detainees Laban sa Detensyon at para sa Amnestiya (Dekla) on Panay Island.

Dekla is the first to be being used as venue for preparing statements, posters and other campaign materials of Bayan Muna and party-list groups Kabataan Party, Gabriela Women's Party and Anakpawis.

Dekla said the attack, the first case of violence on Panay Island against party-list groups, was part of a systematic campaign of the administration to stop the party-list groups from winning in the May elections.

A MILITARY officer presents campaign posters of the group Bayan Muna that the Army says were seized at an alleged NPA camp in Davao City.

"The logical conclusion is that this is the handiwork of the administration as among their dirty tactics to eliminate us," said Dublero.

He said this was released to the press and the proposed resolution of Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo to Leyte, the continued detention of Anakpawis Rep. Crispin Beltran and the filing of criminal and disqualification cases against their leaders.

Dublero said campaign materials of the party-list groups are also being removed from designated points areas in public places in the city.

Senior Supt. Wesley Barayuga, Iloilo City police director, said police were investigating the attack.

In a telephone interview, Ocampo said but they could not rule out the possibility the attack was election-related.

Around 300 Bayan Muna members and supporters held a picket here yesterday to protest the continued assaults against their members and denounce the arrest and the proposed transfer of Ocampo.

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ACCREDITED BY THE PHILIPPINE SOCIETY OF AUDIOLOGY

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY:
BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES
A 2-day Seminar on the Value & Use of Intellectual Property
ATENEO AUDITORIUM, ROCKWELL CENTER, MAKATI CITY
MARCH 29-30, 2007

- What are copyrights, trademarks, and patents and how are they relevant to my business?
- What are the considerations in selecting and using brand names for your goods and services?
- How can character licensing help market my products?
- I have a patent for an invention but I don't have funds to commercialize. What do I do?
- The industry is saturated with big named players! How can franchising help my business?
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Registration Fee is Php6,000.00 (inclusive lunch, AM & PM snacks and seminar kit). Please contact us at (632) 928-8125 or (632) 910-8000 for more details and registration.

Intellectual Property Association of the Philippines

Intellectual Property Office

Corporate Facts, Inc.

Philippine Patent Attorneys, Inc.

Philippine Trademark Practitioners Association

Philippine Women Lawyers Association

PHILIPPINES

Ex-Cebu vice gov charged with drug smuggling

By Jeannen Nagallacan
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—[CRIMINAL CHARGES] have been filed against former Cebu Vice Gov. John Gregory Sytiepiko" Osmeña and 20 others before the Department of Justice in Manila for allegedly smuggling P2.6 billion worth of a shabu ingredient from China to Australia via Cebu three years ago.

But Osmeña's father, former Sen. John H. Osmeña, criticized the timing of the case filing and suspected Malacañang's hand to embarrass him as a senatorial candidate of the opposition coalition, the administration-backed Team Unity.

He also suspected that Cebu Rep. Eduardo Gullas could have promoted the filing of the case because his son wanted to run against him in the first district.

In an interview on Sunday night, the Philippine Drugs Enforcement Agency (PDEA) denied that the filing was politically motivated. It filed the case on March 15 because PDEA personnel had to evaluate all the documents, including the affidavits of witnesses, according to Lydia Bendijo, the agency's legal officer.

Bendijo said Johnielex appeared to be the local contact in Cebu based on the investigation and evidence presented by the Australian federal police.

Several witnesses, including former PDEA regional chief Gaudencio Pagkilig, alleged in their affidavits that the former vice governor called up at least three people and asked for the release of the shipment of pseudoephedrine, a chemical used to make shabu.

The chemical cargo were supposedly to be transported from China to Australia with Cebu as the transshipment point. But the investigation showed the shipment would be stored first in a Bonbon Cebu warehouse before it would be transported to Australia.

The PDEA filed the charges of violations of the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act (Republic Act No. 9165): illegal importation of dangerous drugs as controlled precursors; attempt or conspiracy; criminal liability of government officials and employees; criminal liability of officers of partnership corporations; and liability of a person violating any regulation issue by the board.

"Only the last is bailable," Bendijo said.

Also charged were three treasurer staff members of Osmeña—Joebert Guera, Imelda Villegas and Maria Rosaura Bolden. Guera is reportedly the president of Guarantee Treasures Inc., was signer of the L'TO Glue of pseudoephedrine seized on March 1, 2004.

Other respondents were Mike Cummings, who allegedly represented Courtside Ventures in the import documents; Dirk O'Toole, a friend of Osmeña; Michael Emilio Sanchez and Alexander Castro, Courtside Ventures stockholders; Susan Bernardo, company manager; Leah Bunal; and Maiza Milagros Legaspi.

"The filing of this case, as the campaign period for the 2007 elections is months away, leads one to suspect that Malacañang may have resorted to illegally delaying this case and new cases in filing just to torpedo the Senate bid of a member of the opposition," Osmeña's father said in a statement.

Johnielex is 37 years old and should be responsible for his actions. I can do no more. All I can say (is that) they can go ahead and let the law take its course. In this country, everybody is presumed innocent until proven guilty," he said.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said the respondents could still file an appeal because the case was still at the office of the chief state prosecutor.

JOHN Osmeña cries foul over the filing of the charges, linking it to his bid for a new term as the Senate. Cen

ELECTION '07

The campaign trail brings more promises

AS SENATORIAL AND PARTY-LIST CANDIDATES fanned around the country on campaign sorties the last three weeks, local groups and personalities geared for electoral battles in their own turfs.

In Batangas on Friday, Governor Oppositions candidate Vilma Padilla Lacson got a resounding applause from students and faculty members of the Batangas State College after he said he would be joining the presidential race in 2010.

Lacson interacted with the students and faculty members as re-source speaker in a forum Friday.

Lacson said he still had more laws to draft but that he would again seek the presidency in 2010.

The senator urged students to take an active role in ensuring honest, orderly and peaceful elections.

Prior to the forum, the senator met with local officials led by Gov. Raul Lee and Batangas Bishop Ambrosio Bacani.

LACSON

Misdaro

In Calapan on Thursday, GO nominee Antonio "Tabi" Inocencio III, the first senatorial candidate to campaign in Oriental Mindoro, expressed objections to extrajudicial killings, saying "the law should be upheld."

Clad in wrong pants and a brown T-shirt, Inocencio arrived in a helicopter in Barangay Ilaya before proceeding to the Mindoro State College of Agriculture and Technology and holding a press conference at the Mirasol Hotel here.

He said "the stand of the people [on summary] should not be pushed aside on what the government calls as 'development agenda.'" Mindoro has a 23-year mining ban which is being threatened by a Canada-based mining company.

ESCUDERO

Laguna

Administration senatorial candidate Miguel Zubiri went to his alma mater, the University of the Philippines at Los Baños, and promised to help in the enhancement of the old college's honey sup. UPLB expressed its advisory to the Senate committee on agriculture and push for a budget increase for education.

ZUBIRI

A 1990 graduate of BS Agri-Business and Management from the UPLB College of Economics and Management, Cubiri said he always went to UPLB for advice. "All of the bills that I had authored were products of my development and learnings here in UPLB," he said. In the forum, Zubiri discussed the bills he authored and his platforms for the Senate. He shared with students some environmental problems that require immediate solutions.

He said it was now the time for "well-off (as does)" to give their share to the university.

"I support the tuition increase but not the exact rates that they are asking now, maybe they'll implement it on a staggered basis," he said.

Pangasinan

In Dagupan City, a group of civic, business, student and religious leaders in Pangasinan urged former Gov. Oscar Orbos to run for governor anew amid the bitter in-fighting among local politicians and MO leaders.

"We are desperately looking for principled and decent leadership," said Anni Bacquel-Lacson, convenor of the Pangasinan Advocacy for Democratic and Electoral Reforms.

Bacquel-Lacson said the people of Pangasinan deserve an alternative leader, noting that the "silent majority" in the province had rallied this Orbos, a former executive secretary, remains the choice of the province. Mike Catherine Estimo and Joan Escandor Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon; Carla R. Gomez, Inquirer Visayas; Gabriel Candisman, Inquirer Northern Luzon

ELECTION '07

Elect eco-minded bets, says prelate

By Jerome Aning and TJ Burgonio

VOTE FOR "ECOLOGY-MINDED" candidates.

This was the appeal of Manila Archbishop Cardinal Gaudencio Rosales.

Rosales, an outspoken environmentalist, said that in accordance of God's creations, it was "imperative" for voters to discern who among those aspiring for public office were truly committed to the protection of Mother Nature.

The candidates should defend Mother Nature "from being threatened, contaminated and destroyed by apathy, greed, crass materialism, toxic wastes and chemicals, and the unsustainable use of the earth's dwindling resources," the archbishop said in a statement issued Friday.

Rosales endorsed the efforts of the EcoWatch Coalition, a Quezon City-based group helping educate Filipino voters to elect candidates who champion the cause of the environment.

He said EcoWatch's "Ten Commandments on How to Choose Green Candidates" provided a useful guide on what to look for in a candidate in terms of their environmental track record and platforms.

Meanwhile, the Kalikasan People Network for the Environment (Kalikasan-PNE), said Aurigue did Sen Sup. Prospero Nichos Jr., former Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor and Sen. Edgardo Angara were the "worst three choices" for environmental advocacy and were unworthy of the "green vote."

The three are running for Senate seats in the May 14 elections under the administration's Team Unity ticket.

"These three administration candidates turned out to be the most anti-environment in their stands and practices. They have been prolarge-scale mining and pro-commercial logging for most of their years in public office," Clemencio Fuentes Jr., Kalikasan-PNE national coordinator, said in a statement.

He urged "all nature lovers and environmentalists to zealously reconsider voting for such politicians," because they had not shown any "political will to stand for the environment and the people's welfare."

Pillay pushed for the implementation of the Mining Act of 1995, supported mining and logging companies in his province, and opposed calls for commercial log ban, he said.

Angara stood for the implementation of the Mining Act, and opposed calls for a log ban. His family has logging interests in Aurora province, this he said.

Of the three, Defensor logged the most number of anti-environment policies, especially when he served as environment secretary from August 2004 to January 2005, according to Kalikasan-PNE.

He also backed the Mining Act, the Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement (JPEPA), whose ratification it is feared would pave the way for the entry of more sugar in the country from Japan, and the resumption of Lafayette Mining Company's operations in Rapu-Rapu Island, Albay.

ROSALES

Sotto let me down, says FPJ daughter

By Norman Bordadora

THE DAUGHTER OF THE LATE ACtor and presidential contender Fernando Poe Jr. yesterday expressed disappointment over former Sen. Vicente Sotto III's decision to run under the administration ticket rather than under the Genuine Opposition.

Mary Grace Poe-Llamanzares, honorary chair of the Filipinos for Peace, Justice and Progress movement (FPJPM) party-list group, said Sotto had worked very closely with her father during the 2004 electoral campaign against President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"I am very disappointed," Llamanzares told reporters following the "press conference confirmation" of FPJPM as a party-list group vying for seats in the House of Representatives in the coming elections.

She said would have secured him to run under the opposition," she said.

FPJPM is the run up to the 2004 polls was known as the FPJ for President Movement. It was announced in a gathering and a show of signatures nationwide to nominate Poe, former friend of deposed President Joseph Estrada, to run for president.

Of the three Gen. Edgardo Angara, former Sen. Dante Aquino Ortiz and Sotto), it was Ortiz who was closest to my family. He (Ortiz) has to run under the opposition," Llamanzares said.

Angara, Sotto and Ortiz were active in Poe's campaign in 2004.

Sotto had said Llamanzares and Poe's widow, Susan Roces, had told him that they would not stand his decision to run under the administration slate.

He said that even Poe would have supported his decision as the latter is now wanted only with misdemeanor charges pending in court.

While lauding support to the FPJPM party list as the group's honorary chair, Llamanzares said she was not inclined to accept the group's nomination as its second nominee if it decides to nominate her in the next few days.

"I'm more inclined now to [say]," she said. "I'm more effective as a representative in a group supporting calls for genuine change."

FPJPM yesterday announced Nonie Cudiamat, FPJPM president, would be the party-list group's nominee.

It was Cudiamat who initiated the gathering of at least a million signatures before 2004 to convince Poe to run for president.

Trillanes seeks media access anew

By DJ Yap

DETAINED SENT LT. Antonio Trillanes IV, who is seeking a Senate seat under the Genuine Opposition ticket, appealed yesterday a ruling by a Makati court denying him full access to media.

Trillanes, through his lawyer Reynaldo Robles, asked Judge Oscar Pimentel of Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 148 to reconsider his March 5 order rejecting Trillanes' motion to be allowed to be interviewed in detention.

In a 13-page motion for reconsideration, Trillanes said the leader of the Magdalo group of junior military officers central for the failed 2003 Oakwood mutiny said he cannot file a fact that I am not on equal footing with the other candidates.

"This is exactly the reason why my request is to be given access to the media and not to be treated and as he al. lowed to campaign outside my place of detention," he added.

Trillanes also said there was no basis for Pimentel's concern he would make utilize positive statements to discuss the merits of his case with the media, as he had never done so in the past.

He said the denial of media access "clearly violates" his rights to free exercise, and censorship, both of which are favored upon by the Constitution."

In his order, Pimentel said Trillanes had "the right to vote and campaign but such right had no basis before."

"He must still yield to other matters which are of public concern and interest, which in this case are the internal rules of the Malacañang and the proceedings before this court," Pimentel said.

"If to freedom of the press, such constitutional guarantee will has to comply with existing laws and jurisprudence. It is not absolute," he said.

Noynoy to GMA: Tell it to the OFWs

By Norman Bordadora

OPPOSITION CANDIdate Benigno Aquino III has challenged President Macapagal-Arroyo to prove her claim the economy and employment rate had improved before the nine million Filipinos leaving overseas and their families.

Aquino said it was up to Mrs Arroyo to convince the overseas Filipino workers and their loved ones if she was the right time to return to the country because of the growing economy and better employment opportunities.

"I challenge President Arroyo to declare before the families of our OFWs how good the national economy has become and how the local employment situation has improved," Aquino said in a press statement.

Aquino's remarks came in the wake of Mr Arroyo's pronouncement last week the country's employment situation had vastly improved with the gains in the economy.

The President on Friday cited National Statistics Office data showing the unemployment rate dropped to 7.8 percent in January from 8.1 percent a year ago.

Aquino, an economics graduate from the Ateneo de Manila University, said he disagreed with the said of Mrs Arroyo's figures.

"Sumemlang an economic growth that benefits only the rich but not the poor majority is dangerous as it may eventually erode the Filipino people's faith in our democratic system," Aquino said.

In a scathing denouncing applicable gauntlet is important to political freedom. There must be equity and everyone must get the benefits. Our democratic system will be weakened if only the rich get richer and the poor get poorer," he said.

In remarks during the ceremony for the first Benigno Aquino Jr. Distinguished Professorial Chair in Corporate Responsibility and Governance at the Dr. Jo Safe Professional Schools Ramon V. del Rosario Sr. Graduate School of Business at the DLSU Taft campus on Saturday, Aquino said the unequitable tillage in the country were a result of the Arroyo administration's failure to address social inequity and its insensitive to seeking the insurgency" with a hearty hand."

He said the government's failure to bridge the gap between the rich and poor had heightened social conflicts and resulted in the killing of activists and journalists mainly by military elements.

Early Hop to Summer

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, March 20, 2007
4th Week of Lent

1st Reading: Isa 47: 1-8, 12
Gospel: John 5: 1-3, 5-16

There was a feast of the Jews and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now, by the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem, there is a pool (called Bethesda in Hebrew) surrounded by five galleries. In these galleries lay a multitude of sick people... blind, lame and paralyzed.

There was a man who had been sick for 38 years. Jesus saw him, and since he knew how long this man had been ailing, he said to him, "Do you want to be healed?" And the sick man answered, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is disturbed; in while I am still on my way, another steps down before me."

Jesus then said to him, "Get up! Take your mat and walk." And at once the man was healed, and he took up his mat and walked.

Now that day happened to be the Sabbath. So the Jews said to the man who had just been healed, "It is the Sabbath and the Law doesn't allow you to carry your mat." He answered them, "The one who healed me said to me: 'Take up your mat and walk.'" They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you: 'Take up your mat and walk?'" But the sick man had no idea who it was who had cured him, for Jesus had slipped away among the crowd that filled the place.

Afterwards Jesus met him in the Temple court and told him, "Now you are well; don't sin again, lest something worse happen to you." And the man went back and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him. So the Jews persecuted Jesus because he performed healings like this on the Sabbath.

Commentary

Bethesda is taken as the temple to see the waters to be—those are the waters of salvation, of baptism, and of the temple and the church, flowing from the side of Jesus rather than the ones near the building. Jesus goes to the temple and sees all the sick lying by the Sheep Pool, called Bethesda. And Good Shepherd that he is, he chooses to heal the man who has been sick for 38 years. Jesus knows how long this man has been sick, but he chooses to heal him. He knows that it is good for him to be healed. The man complains and gives excuses about why he can't get into the water quick enough and Jesus commands him to "stand up and walk." He is healed and walks.

But the scene quickly shifts the leaders because it was a Sabbath and he (Jesus) was preaching. Mad! He has no idea who Jesus is because Jesus had slipped away after healing him. Jesus goes and finds him (four days after!) in the temple and says to him: "Stop sinning now—and you're the reason you're back and informs on Jesus, causing the leaders to persecute Jesus even more. And what about us...are we more forgiven, healed, nurtured by Jesus...do we detail any of his miracles or do we use our experiences with him to cause problems among others, other believers and those who are religious for their own agenda?

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Police chiefs propose peace pact for poll bets

PNP cites rising cases of violence during elections

By Nancy C. Carvajal

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Sats: Mar's Bon, Cloroma 2 Hlkd -Mar 24, Apr 14, 21, 28, May 5 & 12
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BAN BEFORE THE CAMPAIGN PERIOD FOR candidates running for local posts was set to kick off, police directors in the metropolis were ordered to take preventive measures against election-related violence.

"Police agencies should resolve to take positive measures to prevent or minimize violence during this year's elections," Deputy Director General Reynaldo Varilla, National Capital Regional Police Office chief, said.

Varilla issued the order in a two-page letter dated March 16 which he sent to the directors of the five police districts in Metro Manila.

He noted that since previous elections showed that "the pattern of violence has been increasing, resulting in an increasing number of fatalities," Varilla proposed several "preventive measures" to reduce violence in the May 14 national and local elections.

Based on historic timetable records, the number of deaths due to election violence has gone up in the past three elections. There were 45 cases in 1998, 90 in 2001 and 163 in 2004.

Varilla suggested that the Metro police district directors initiate the signing of a peace covenant among the candidates in their respective areas. Police heads, he said, should conduct dialogues with parties perceived to have the capability to stir violence.

Varilla further suggested that officers seek help from influential sectors in compelling the candidates to honor the peace covenant.

Among the sectors mentioned by the NCRPO chief were the Church, respected elders and media. In the same order, Varilla also reminded his officers of their responsibility to implement "aggressive measures" in the event of an election-related violent incident.

"Commanders shall immediately identify, arrest and prosecute the suspect and install measures to prevent the occurrence of similar incidents," he said.

"As a matter of policy, the occurrences of an election-related violent incident shall be taken against the efficiency of the leader under the concept of command responsibility," Varilla added.

3 fires hit Quezon City, eastern Metro

By Santiago R. Alcantara, Jeannette I. Andrade and Kristine L. Alave

A FIRE LEFT ABOUT 90 FAMILIES HOMELESS in Mandaluyong City yesterday morning, hours after 10 houses burned to the ground in Quezon City.

Four people were hurt in the fire in Mandaluyong which broke out at 10:20 a.m. yesterday in a dilapidated area at Block 7 Bellaire-ville-Compound in Barangay Addition Hills.

One of them was a fire volunteer, said Senior Insp. Ferdinand Tanares, fire operations chief. Tanares added that the fire, which was placed under control after two hours, razed 30 houses. According to PO2 Marcos Cubitas, at least three families lived in each dwelling.

As of press time, authorities were still trying to determine the total cost of damage to property caused by the fire.

Cubitas said the blaze started in the house of Jo Bacon which had no electricity at that time. The victims were evacuated to the Fabella Memorial School where they are expected to stay until Thursday, Mandaluyong Mayor Neptali Gonzales II said in a statement.

Meanwhile, a fire partially destroyed the rooftop of the abandoned Pedernales Building along Dolijan Avenue in Pasig City Sunday night. The fire broke out at about 8 p.m., after dislodged wood materials and rubbish caught fire. No casualties or injuries were reported and damage was "negligible," the report added.

In Quezon City, 58 persons lost their homes when a fire that started from an unattended stove spread through a row of shanties on Sunday night.

The fire razed 10 houses on Guallad Street, Manuyo Subdivision in Barangay Batasan. It started at 8:33 p.m. and was put out more than an hour later.

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THE DIRECTOR

NOTICE OF CARP COVERAGE

Editor has mixed emotions to junking of parricide raps

By DJ Yap

HOUSE COUPLES WITH CHILD WHO the creation of the husband of slain media executive Bella Gutierrez upon learning that the parricide charges against him had been dismissed, his lawyer said.

"Para kaniya meron siyang kulang," Lucky Siguenas said of Boots Gutierrez, who was accused of killing his wife.

"For them's still grief because he lost his wife and his children lost their mother," the lawyer told the reporter in a phone interview. "So, for them to put all this behind him."

Bella was the president and chief executive officer of Media Global Corp., publisher of PC World magazine, while Boots served as editor of the magazine and chair of the company.

On Sept. 5, Bella's body was found inside the office toilet at Eastville II building at 116 Bolbis St., Legaspi Village. She had several stab wounds on the chest and a slash on the neck.

Last Friday, the Makati City prosecutor junked the murder charges against Boots, saying there was insufficient evidence to prove he was responsible for his wife's death.

Assistant City Prosecutor Henry Inciong said the investigators relied mostly on "circumstantial evidence" and could not fully establish Boots's motive. The evidence did not indicate that Bella was assaulted, and based on the preliminary investigation, she may have killed herself, he added.

In one case claiming the position, two investigators, the couple's children, Paulo Lorenzo, Debra Andrea, Gary Carlo and Miguel Raymundo filed a motion seeking the dismissal of the case which they described as "absolutely groundless."

The initial autopsy conducted by Salustre Nabial, the police medico legal officer, said the "mortally inflicted on the body of the deceased were not self-inflicted and that she did not commit suicide." But Senior Inspector Angel Raquel Bernas said the evidence indicated the death was "intentional and self-inflicted."

The lawyers tried to talk to Boots for comment, but Siguenas said the client preferred to keep silent. Bella's relatives also declined to comment.

Of golf and graft

ON TARGET
RAMON TULFO

IT SEEMS THE ABOVE COMMISSION, despite its vaunted anti-graft campaign, can't do any project without corruption lurking in it.

The multimillion-peso infrastructure projects to spruce up Metro Cebu for the recent formation of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) summit is a case in point.

What was supposed to be a showcase of the Filipino's design and construction ingenuity turned out to be a showcase of graft and greed. Reports are now coming out about the alleged 12,000 peacock overprice of the lampposts in a private resort on Mactan Island.

Street lamps that were supposed to cost only P11,000 and P18,000 per unit were overpriced at P70,000 each.

The government should lose no time in going after the contractors, Gangsh Construction and Development Inc., and Jubaidi Contractor, as well as some DPWH officials alleged to be involved in the scam.

Mr. Ricardo de Ocio told the Gangsh is owned by contractor Imelda S. Sinfu, who is very close to a high DPWH official.

Sinfu is often seen playing golf with this DPWH official at the Investacom Golf Club. This is probably the reason you don't see this official making much noise about the multimillion-peso scam.

* * *

I have been approached by politicians-cum-businessmen seeking an injunction issue out of the controversy surrounding the P825-million smuggling and tax evasion case filed against Glitek International Corporation, the oil supply contractor of United Petroleum Philippines Inc., before the BOI.

But I turned them down because I believe the smuggling and tax evasion case filed against Glitek and United owners Paul Co and brothers Noel Co, Roberto Gutierrez and Norman Gabres is about justice and not about politics.

Something is definitely wrong with our justice system since the Bureau of Customs and the BOI, while the government bled from hundreds of billions of revenues lost in alleged oil smuggling and tax evasion.

A case of injustice similar to the Aaron Banzuela case, the whistleblower in the Glitek tax evasion controversy, Gabres ended up being accused of the crime he reported to the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG).

Aaron Banzuela was a handbook executive who exposed irregularities at the bank, but was instead charged along with those whom she accused.

In his motion for reconsideration filed at the BOI, Gabres pointed to "dilemma and fate as the real architects of smuggling and tax evasion operations of their brokerage firm, in cooperation with corresponding customs officials."

In his complaint, Gabres even exhausted hours in conversations, Aaron says a bill of lading to help Co escape paying almost P9 million in taxes.

* * *

The son of a well-known retired Supreme Court justice has a lot of judges and justices in his "stable."

One of those judges plays golf with the lawyers of litigants. During rounds of golf, negotiations and arrangements are made. Another associate, a retired Court of Appeals justice, recently had a serious medical problem.

After that problem, in which this magistrate claims to have a "spiritual encountering," his "talking point" for years to be settled in his dominion has trimmed.

As for that son of the prominent retired high court justice, I wonder if he's also known what he's doing.

'Meager' meal leads to killing of ma

By Jeannette I. Andrade

A 29-YEAR-OLD MAN SUSPECTED OF being drunk and high on drugs killed his mother at midnight yesterday in Novaliches, Quezon City after they argued over a measly dinner dish.

Ferman Mariano Guevarra, a resident of Block 12 Lot 18, Sitio Bonville Subdivision in Bagong Silangan, later gave himself up to policemen, with cleaver in the utensils he was believed to be using when the crime was committed.

The utensils were stained with blood.

Investigators of the Quezon City Police District Criminal Investigation and Detection Division killed his mother, Benita, 49, a vendor by hitting her in the head with a block of stone.

The victim's son, the police said, returned at around 12:30 a.m. yesterday to a vicinity bet on Cristo Street in Barangay Kaligayahan of the same barangay where the victim was a caretaker.

The two reportedly argued over their meal which consisted of dried fish.

Investigators said Guevarra was displeased about the meager meal and asked his mother for money to buy other food. Benita, however, refused and berated him for being jobless. She also threatened to bring him back to the drug rehabilitation center.

According to the police, the suspect had just completed a drug rehab program.

Guevarra's sisters, however, identified one who picked up a large block of stone and hit her.

Cervantes fled after the incident but surrendered later to barangay officials. He was then turned over to the custody of the CIDG.

The suspect is now detained at the QCPD-CIU pending the filing of charges against him.

JV cool to Comelec date for cityhood plebiscite

By Santiago B. Alvarado

COMMISSION ON ELECTION (COMELEC) Chairman Benjamin Abalos wants to hold the plebiscite for the cityhood of San Juan simultaneously with the May 14 elections, Mayor JV Ejercito said yesterday.

Ideally, the plebiscite should be held on April 12, nine months after the bill converting the municipality of San Juan into a city became a law on March 12, according to the mayor.

"It's the law that's going to be violated if Abalos insists on holding the plebiscite on May 14," he added.

"Malinaw na wanna the justification (of San Juan's cityhood) be held on May 14 para quite dahil magulo," Ejercito said after leading his colleagues in a "Imelda Style Dance" in front of the municipal hall. San Juan is marking its 400th anniversary on March 27.

At the same time, Ejercito also announced the granting of a P5,000 commercial bonus to the municipality's over 1,500 government employees.

Fiesta

The mayor joined his constituents in eating fresh food of fried thighs, chicken and pork sisalog, and lechon, among others, using his hands during the Goodie Fight.

Among the guests were Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, Gerardo Ogoy, provincial spokesperson Adel Tamayo, Vice Mayor Leonardo Calles and others in town officials.

The mayor's mother, Gina Gomez, also partook of the food at their makeshift long tables with barong-barong serving as plates.

"Can we do this every year? This is very enjoyable. It's very Filipino," Gomez told her son.

In the meantime, Ejercito reminded that Cesar Domingo Zingcon will be joined against him in the mayoral race.

"Kaming usual dew ni (Team Unity senatorial candidate Lani Cayetano) Ohmpeach," Ejercito said.

DID YOU KNOW

HISTORICAL TID: 1780, Charles III of Spain created the Royal Philippine Co. which was given the exclusive right to bring cotton to goods from China, India and other parts of the Philippines, and to ship these directly to Spain via the Cape of Good Hope. It was abolished in 1828 after Manila was opened to international trade.

Cyril J. Bendaña,
Inquirer Research

METROBRIEFS

Worried sister

FORMER Cebu Pacific flight attendant Jessica Rochelle Barrameda yesterday sought the help of the National Bureau of Investigation in finding her 26-year-old sister. Barrameda was accompanied by her father, Robert, when she reported the disappearance of her sister, Ruby Grace Jessica. Barrameda said they last saw Jessica on Wednesday afternoon before she went to a bank to deposit money on behalf her guest. Barrameda said that Jessica, a resident of Mandaluyong City, disappeared after her sister's disappearance might have something to do with the complaint. Jessica filed against her estranged husband, Manuel Jessica III. The complaint, for violation of Republic Act 9262 or the Anti-Violence against Women and Children Act of 2004, was later dismissed. Assistant Regional Director Vicente de Guzman, chief of the bureau's Special Investigation Unit, said they have asked Manuel to submit himself to the NBI for investigation.

— Tina B. Santos

Missing girl

NURSE Phyllis Marie Bernardo, 15, was seen leaving home on March 19, 2006 was last seen at the SFC restaurant on Timoteo Aguinaldo corner E. Campa Street in Manila. Those who have any information about the victim's whereabouts may call the Division of RVOIS, 8 8887515 or 8 8887516.

US to maintain ban on aid to new Palestinian gov't

JERUSALEM – THE UNITED STATES and Israel on Sunday agreed to keep a ban on financial aid to the new Palestinian government, but in a break with the Jewish state, Washington left room for contacts with non-Hamas ministers.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon made clear talks on Palestinian statehood with President Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah were not an option at this time and appealed to the international community to shun the government until it recognizes Israel and renounces violence.

Israel has vowed to boycott the new government in its entirety, including non-Hamas ministers.

US National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley said Washington would not deal with the Palestinian government, but the US consulate general in Jerusalem said some contacts with ministers who are not Hamas members would be permitted on a case-by-case basis.

Hadley told CNN that the new government had not undertaken to recognize Israel, abide by existing agreements and renounce violence and that Washington "would only deal with this government when it accepts those principles."

Palestinians hope the partnership between Abbas' secular Fatah faction and Islamist Hamas will stop the cycle of fighting and ease a crippling aid embargo that has increased poverty.

Abbas appointed Hamas' long-time foe, Mohammad Dahlan, to oversee the divided Palestinian security forces.

As the government's first meeting in the Gaza Strip, officials said their goal was to quickly end infighting that has killed more than 300 Palestinians in the past year.

"We know it is a difficult mission," the new Palestinian Information minister, Mustafa al-Barghouthi, said.

Shlomo Ben-Ami, Israeli Minister of Public Security, said the year-old intifada was driven and so the Palestinian government should not be judged by its actions alone.

"We have to see the whole picture," he told Israel Radio.

Sharon's office said the Israeli leader had spoken to Abbas by telephone on Sunday and invited him to a meeting in the next few days.

Israel has also vowed not to hand over to the newly government tax revenues it has been withholding.

Dissent could complicate Abbas' efforts to consolidate his rule and revive peace talks with Israel.

Abbas said contacts with Abbas would be limited to matters related to "the quality of life of the Palestinian population."

"The new government, as it has been declared and presented, limits our ability to conduct a dialogue with... (Abbas) and narrows the range of issues which are might have been able to discuss in the coming period," he told his cabinet. – Reuters

WELCOMING SPRING
Participants dressed in traditional costumes march during a floral tribute for the "Virgen de los Desamparados" (Virgin of the Defenseless) in Valencia March 19. The floral tribute is part of the Fallas Festival, which welcomes spring and honors Saint Joseph's Day. REUTERS

Japan, China historians meet to tackle past

TOKYO – EFFORTS BY JAPANESE and China began a second round of talks on the nations' long and sometimes troubled history on Monday in a diplomatic front thawed over Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi Jun'ichiro's remarks on wartime brothels.

The two-day meeting of 20 academics, 10 from each side, is expected to agree on the agreed-on subjects including the Nanjing Massacre for discussion in subcommittees, Kyodo news agency quoted Japanese sources as saying.

The group aims to conclude the study with a report in 2008.

It has met just four times in drafting after the two Chinese President Hu Jintao in a three-sounding visit there in October.

She has made it a priority to repair bilateral ties with China and South Korea, strained by his predecessor's repeated visits to Tokyo shrine to war dead that is seen by Beijing and Seoul as a symbol of Japan's militarism during World War II.

But she sparked outrage overseas by saying earlier this month there was no proof that Japan's government or army had forced women, mostly Asian and many of them Korean, to serve Japanese soldiers in brothels during World War II.

He has since sought to dampen the furor, which threatened to cloud summits with Chinese and US leaders, by repeating that a 1995 Japanese apology to the "comfort women"—as they are known in Japan—stood and expressing sympathy for their suffering. Reuters

Math experts solve E8

PASADENA, CA – AFTER FOUR YEARS of intensive collaboration, 18 top mathematicians and computer scientists from the United States and Europe have successfully mapped E8, one of the largest and most complicated structures in mathematics, a milestone said last Tuesday.

Jeffrey Adams, project leader and mathematician professor at the University of Maryland said E8 was discovered over a century ago in 1887, and until now, no one thought the structure could ever be understood.

"The groundbreaking achievement is significant both as an advance in basic knowledge, as well as a major advance in the use of large-scale computing to solve complicated mathematical problems," Adams said.

He added that the mapping of E8 may well have unforeseen implications in mathematics and physics which must be evident for years to come.

E8 belongs to so-called Lie groups that were invented by a 19th century Norwegian mathematician, Sophus Lie, to study symmetry.

The theory holds that underlying any symmetrical object, such as a sphere, is a Lie group.

Balls, cylinders or cones are familiar examples of symmetric three-dimensional objects.

However, mathematicians study symmetries in higher dimensions. In fact, E8 itself is 248-dimensional.

The scientists said the magnitude of the E8 calculation exceed computation such the Human Genome Project.

While the human genome, which contains all the genetic information of a cell, is less than a gigabyte in size, the result of the E8 calculations, which contains all the information about E8, is 60 gigabytes in size, they said.

This is enough to store 45 days of continuous music in MP3 format. If written out in print, the answer would cover an area the size of Manhattan. AFP

WORLD BRIEFS

US Senate to subpoena Rove in firings

WASHINGTON – The Senate Judiciary Committee chair intends to subpoena White House political strategist Karl Rove and other officials involved in firings if prosecutors are unwilling anything short of their testimony under oath in public, "I am sick and tired of getting bull—talking to me," Democratic Senator Patrick Leahy said Tuesday. "I do not believe in this. We'll have a private meeting for you and you can tell us exactly what you want." At issue is the firing of eight US attorneys, dismissals that Democrats say were politically motivated. Such prosecutors serve at the pleasure of the president. The White House was expected to announce early this week whether it will let Rove, former White House counsel Harriet Miers and other officials testify. If the White House refuses to make the officials available, the subpoenas could result in a legal showdown between newly energized Democrats and a White House emboldened by the unexpectedly of the Senate. AP

First-class flight with a corpse

LONDON – A passenger in first class woke up to a dead stewardess found himself sitting next to a corpse on a British Airways flight. British newspapers reported on Monday. Paul Sinden, 64, said cabin crew moved the body of the elderly woman from the economy section where she had died shortly after take-off. He told the Sun newspaper that the woman was strapped into her seat but because of turbulence it kept slipping down on to the floor. "Under a business-class curtain at saying, "It was horrible. The body had to be wedged in place with lots of pillows." British Airways has apologized for any distress suffered, according to the reports. "An airline spokesman said: "We apologize but we were unable to offer an alternative circumstances and chose the option they thought would cause least disruption." Reuter

New washing machine does it faster

TOKYO – For Japanese people who want their time to be more finite, a company on Monday unveiled a washing machine billed to be the quickest in the world. Mitsubishi Electric said it has made four machines that changes angles automatically depending on the volume of clothes and friction. The "Moving Drum" machine can wash nine kilograms of clothes in 28 minutes and dry six kilograms in 180 minutes – half the time of a traditional washer. AFP

PARTIAL ECLIPSE
Birds fly past another sun-lens with a partial eclipse as seen from Chennai, India, Monday March 19.

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Telefax: (046) 417-0000 loc. 100

DepED

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) of the DepED Division of Bacoor City invites all eligible contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the Supply and Delivery of the following:

Item No.	Qty	Item Description of Goods	Unit of Measure	Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)	Period of Delivery	Date and Time of Pre-Bid Conference	Date and Time of Opening of Bids
1		Office Supplies and Materials (Lot)					
	1	Bond Paper (White)	Rim	Php 300,000.00			
	2	Bond Paper (Colored)	Rim	Php 100,000.00			
	3	Ballpen (Black, Blue, Red)	Box	Php 50,000.00	Within 15 calendar days	March 31, 2005 10:00 a.m.	April 7, 2005 10:00 a.m.
2		Computer Supplies and Materials (Lot)					
	1	Ink Cartridge (Black)	Piece	Php 150,000.00			
3		Janitorial Supplies and Materials (Lot)					
	1	Liquid Soap	Gallon	Php 100,000.00			
4		Medical Supplies and Materials (Lot)					
	1	Alcohol, 70%	Bottle	Php 50,000.00			
5		Furniture and Fixtures (Lot)					
	1	Table, Office	Piece	Php 50,000.00			
	2	Chair, Office	Piece	Php 50,000.00			
6		Motor Vehicle (Lot)					
	1	Toyota Hilux 4x2	Unit	Php 1,000,000.00			
7		Motorcycle (Lot)					
	1	Honda XRM 125	Unit	Php 100,000.00			
8		Computer Set (Lot)					
	1	Desktop Computer	Unit	Php 50,000.00			
	2	Laser Printer	Unit	Php 20,000.00			
9		Air Conditioning Unit (Lot)					
	1	Split Type, 1.5 HP	Unit	Php 30,000.00			
	2	Window Type, 1.5 HP	Unit	Php 25,000.00			

All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in any of the following forms: (a) Cash, Cashier's/Manager's Check, Bank Draft/Guarantee or Irrevocable Letter of Credit issued by a Universal or Commercial Bank; (b) Surety Bond callable upon demand issued by a surety or insurance company duly certified by the Insurance Commission; or (c) Any combination of the foregoing.

The Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) will conduct a Pre-Bid Conference on March 31, 2005 10:00 a.m. at the Division Conference Room, DepED Division of Bacoor City, Mid-Bacoor Boulevard, Bacoor, Cavite. All prospective bidders are invited to attend.

Bidding documents may be purchased from the BAC Secretariat, Division of Bacoor, Mid-Bacoor Boulevard, Bacoor, Cavite upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Five Hundred Pesos (Php 500.00). The bidding documents may also be downloaded free of charge from the website of the Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS) at www.philgeps.gov.ph and the website of the Department of Education at www.deped.gov.ph.

Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before 10:00 a.m. of April 7, 2005. All bids must be accompanied by a sworn statement, among others, as required by the 2003 Implementing Rules and Regulations of R.A. 9184, entitled "Affidavit of Non-Involvement in Unlawful Acts or Transactions and Undertaking". Each prospective bidder shall submit one (1) original and two (2) copies of the bid.

Bid opening shall be on April 7, 2005 10:00 a.m. at the Division Conference Room, DepED Division of Bacoor City, Mid-Bacoor Boulevard, Bacoor, Cavite. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend. Late bids shall not be accepted.

The Bids and Awards Committee reserves the right to reject any and all bids, declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder.

Engr. ROMEO C. DAÑAS, JR.
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

Supreme Court of the Philippines
Judicial and Bar Council
Manila

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Judicial and Bar Council (JBC) announces that pursuant to its policy and practice, the following first-time qualified Presiding Justice & Associate Justices of the Court of Appeals are automatically considered for nomination to the position of **ASSOCIATE JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT** vice Hon. Romeo J. Callejo Sr., who will compulsorily retire on 28 April 2007: Presiding Justice **RUBEN T. REYES** and Associate Justices **CONRADO M. VASQUEZ JR.**; **PORTIA ALIÑO HORMACHUELOS**, **MARTIN S. VILLARAMA JR.**; and **ANDRES B. REYES JR.**

Conformably with Section 7, Rule 7 of the Rules of the Judicial and Bar Council (JBC 009), as amended, the public is hereby invited to the panel interviews of the eleven nominated candidates together with the other candidates for the said position, at the Division Hearing Room, Ground Flr., New Supreme Court Building, on the following dates and time:

March 29, 2007
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon:

1. **ADOSTA**, ERNESTO S.
2. **BRION**, ARTURO D.
3. **DE CASTRO**, TERESITA Leonardo

2:00 – 5:00 p.m.

4. **FLORES**, TERESITA Dy-Liacco
5. **HORMACHUELOS**, Portia Aliño
6. **LOCK**, CHRISTOPHER O.

March 29, 2007
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon:

1. **ONG**, GREGORY S.
2. **REYES**, ANDRES JR., B.
3. **SANDOVAL**, ESULEPTO S.

2:00 – 5:00 p.m.

4. **VASQUEZ**, CONRADO MELCHOR JR., M.
5. **VILLARAMA**, MARTIN JR., S.
6. **VILLARUZ**, FRANCISCO JR., H.

Presiding Justice RUBEN T. REYES and Justice EDGARDO P. CRUZ of the Court of Appeals, who are candidates for the same position, were already interviewed by the JBC on 19 January 2007.

The JBC also announces that the following are candidates for the position of **ASSOCIATE JUSTICE OF THE COURT OF APPEALS** vice Hon. Roberto A. Barrios, who passed away on 13 February 2007:

1. ACUÑA, EDMUNDO T.
2. AGLORO, GUILLERMO P.
3. ALHAMBRA, REYNALDO A.
4. ALIM, ROSE MARY M.
5. APURILLO, SALVADOR Y.
6. APULES, HENRY D.
7. AYSON, RUBEN C.
8. BALONZO, FREDERICO
9. BARCELONA, III MANUEL C.
10. BARRIOS, IMMANUEL M.
11. BISQUERA, JOE SANTOS B.
12. BORRETA, ABRAHAM B.
13. CORREA, LIBRADO S.
14. DIAZ, ANITA G.
15. DIAZ, RAMON A.
16. DUEVA, CULOGA M.
17. DELOS SANTOS, EDGARDO L.
18. DIAMANTE, FRANCHITO N.
19. DOMINGO, LORNA N.
20. DUMAYAG, WINLOVE M.
21. DUMOJM, JR. SIMEON P.
22. ERUM, BERNARITA G.
23. ESCOBIDO, JOSE L.
24. ESPAÑOL, JR. JOSE III
25. FABROS, AMELIA K.
26. FRANCISCO, RAYMUNDO T.
27. FRANCISCO, RENATO E.
28. FRUELDA, CARMELITA G.
29. GABRIAN, SAMUEL H.
30. GANAY, CLIFTON G.
31. GERONIMO, WAGAMI A.
32. GRULLA, CELITO M.
33. HERRERA, JR. OSCAR C.
34. INFANTE, AMELIA T.
35. INOTURAN, NAPOLEON B.
36. INTING, SIDDONG B.
37. ITURRALDE, PHILBERT I.
38. KALLOS, ROBERT E.
39. LACAP, MERCEDES P.
40. LADARO-JAVIER, IMY C.
41. LLOREN, EDGARDO T.
42. LOPEZ, ROMULO A.
43. MACALINO, FLORITO S.
44. MAPO, MARIGEL A.
45. MEDINA, ADELAIDA A.
46. MUÑEZ, RENATO D.
47. NERI JR., GRACIANO B.
48. REYES, WILFREDO T.
49. PAREDES, MENRADO P.
50. PAREDES, VICTORIA ISABEL A.
51. PATRICIO, ROGER G.
52. PE-AGUIRRE, THELMA C.
53. PERALTA, JR. EDUARDO B.
54. PINTO, OFELIA T.
55. QUERUBIN, PERLA B.
56. QUIROZ, ALEX L.
57. REGALA, LEAH O.
58. REYES, AMOR A.
59. SADAN, MEHOL K.
60. SAYNOCO, ISMAEL G.
61. SORONGON, EDWIN D.
62. TANGUANCO, EDUARDO I.
63. VILLAFOR, EDWIN A.
64. ZALAMEDA, RODIL V.

The public may submit sworn complaint, written report, or opposition against any of the aforesaid applicants NOT LATER THAN MARCH 27, 2007, to the JBC Secretariat, 2nd Flr., Centennial Bldg., Supreme Court, Padre Faura St., Manila.
(Tel. No. 552-9512; Fax No. 552-9598; e-mail address: **jbc@supremecourt.gov.ph**; **jbc_supremecourt@yahoo.com.ph**
March 16, 2007

MA. LOIDA D. VILLARAMA
Clerk of Court & JBC
Ex Officio Secretary

The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Ibanez

US, N. Korea resolve bank row; talks begin

BEIJING—THE UNITED STATES SAID MONDAY IT HAD struck a deal with North Korea on a long-running financial sanctions dispute, clearing the way for progress in talks on ending Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program.

All of the roughly 25 million dollars in North Korean funds frozen in a Macau-based bank since 2005 over accusations of money laundering and counterfeiting will be released, chief US nuclear envoy Christopher Hill said.

"We feel this matter has been resolved and now we can move on to other problems, of which there are many," Hill told reporters after the US Treasury Department announced the deal.

The announcement came shortly before the start of a fresh round of six-party negotiations in Beijing aimed at ending North Korea's nuclear ardor. The talks involve the two Koreas, China, the United States, Japan and Russia.

Pyongyang had insisted that a second set implement a six-nation accord reached on Feb. 13 until the sanctions dispute was resolved.

Under last month's deal, North Korea—which conducted its first atomic test in October last year—would get badly needed energy aid and diplomatic concessions in return for shutting down its nuclear programs.

South Korea was given 60 days from the signing of the agreement to close its main nuclear reactor in Yongbyon and allow international atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors back into the country to supervise.

In return, North Korea would initially receive 50,000 tons of heavy fuel oil or equivalent energy aid if it permanently dismantled its atomic weapons program.

Hill said he now expected the initial process items of the February accord to be implemented on schedule. AFP

DEMONSTRATORS march during an antiwar protest in New York, Mar. 18. Calling for the 'unfunding' of the war in Iraq or the immediate return of US troops, they marched through Manhattan and took their case to the offices of the state's two Democratic senators. AP

Protests in US seek end to Iraq war

NEW YORK—ANTIWAR DEMONstrators marched for at least 1,000 cardboard-lit vigils around the United States on Monday, the four of protests demanding an end to the war in Iraq four years after it began.

"We cannot send tens of thousands of exhausted, underequipped and unprepared troops into the middle of an Iraqi civil war," left-leaning organizer MoveOn.org said in a statement, which claimed late Sunday that 1,000 vigils were planned around the country.

Thousands of antiwar protesters took to New York's streets Sunday, demanding US withdrawal of troops from Iraq, in a second day of national rallies marking the fourth anniversary of the war.

Organizers from the group United for Peace and Justice said between 20,000 and 30,000 people marched in the rally, which came a day after similar mass protests in Washington and Los Angeles. Police did not estimate the turnout.

A colorful mixture of students, civilians, Vietnam war veterans and musicians marched through Midtown Manhattan, drumming and chanting slogans such as "Troops out now!" and calling for President George W. Bush to be impeached.

Waving placards reading "Stop Bush. Not Results," and "Nine Years Too Long," the crowds braved near-freezing temperatures as they marched under clear skies down Fifth Avenue to a park on 42nd Street.

"This is not a revenge, lefty movement. This is the voice of the people," said actor Tim Robbins, a prominent and vocal critic of the Iraq war, who was among those leading the march.

"American people want this war to end, so when are we going to start listening to them?" he asked. "The main message is to stop this immoral war." AFP

Insurgents kill 7 more US troops

BAGHDAD—INSURGENTS IN IRAQ killed seven more US troops in security forces uniform Sunday they exposed seven chemical attacks after three dirty bombs left two policemen dead and 350 sickened.

Almost exactly four years after the US-led invasion, American casualties are still mounting as US and Iraqi forces battle to quell the insurgent and sectarian violence gripping the country.

The US military said four troops were killed on Saturday when a roadside bomb ripped through a patrol in west Baghdad.

Another soldier was killed the same day when a foot patrol was targeted by a bomb in the north. AFP

WHAT'S INSIDE
■ Chot makes do with 11 cagers /A22

SPORTS
Editor Teddyvic S. Melendres

■ Singh finally a winner at Palmer's Place /A23

Marquez: Pacman fight on hold

New WBC champ ready for 2nd Barrera clash

MANNY PACQUIAO IS OUT OF THE WBC super featherweight title loop for now.

Mexican warriors Juan Manuel Marquez and Marco Antonio Barrera shot down an immediate confrontation with the Filipino superstar after figuring in a three-battle orchestrated by Top Rank Inc. on Saturday that had fight fans clamoring for a rematch and promoters looking forward to another box-office blockbuster.

Marquez affirmed his prominence and erased Barrera's dream by unanimous decision in what could be the "Fight of the Year." But Barrera, the "Baby-faced assassin," did not disappoint either as the delight of the sellout crowd at the Mandalay Bay Arena in Las Vegas.

The victory boosted Marquez's stock no end. He said he is willing to give Barrera a chance to reclaim the title in a bout tentatively set on Sept. 15, Mexico's Independence Day, before taking on Pacquiao next.

"We're shooting for that date," said Golden Boy CEO Richard Schaefer, as quoted by Fightnews. "We'll have to talk to both camps first, but you know like shows. When the 12th round came, they weren't cheering for Marco Antonio Barrera or Juan Manuel Marquez...they were cheering for Mexico."

Marquez has said he wants another crack at Pacquiao, who is preparing at the Wild Card Gym in Los Angeles for his April 14 showdown with unbeaten Mexican Jorge Solis for the WBC International super featherweight crown at the Alamodome in San Antonio, Texas.

MARQUEZ: Pacquiao not wait

PACQUIAO: Due in the cold

"I would like to fight Pacquiao," Marquez said. Boxingworldwatch.com, "The result of our first fight is a major draw on my side."

In their first encounter in 2004, Pacquiao floored Marquez three times in the first round before the Mexican rallied to salvage a controversial draw and keep his WBA and IBF featherweight belts.

Now, Marquez feels he is ready to return the favor and reclaim what can pride that had been picked away from by Pacquiao.

Barrera, on the other hand, is asking for some time to reflect on whether to go on or hang up his gloves.

"I will do what the fans want," Barrera said. Boxingworld.com. "But first, I want to make a vacation. Spend some time with my family."

He also wants to avenge his 11th round TKO defeat to Pacquiao in 2003, but at this stage he may not be up to the challenge anymore.

Logically Marquez should be pitted against Pacquiao now, but the Filipino's contract problems with Golden Boy Promotions make that unlikely to happen within the year.

Volven C. Lagumbay, Carole Baaler

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MAUTISTA

Boom Boom keen on P. de Leon fight

UNDEFEATED YOUNG FILIPINO boxing sensation Boy "Boom Boom" Mautista relishes the prospect of a future meeting with World Boxing Organization super featherweight champion Daniel Ponce de Leon of Mexico.

But Mautista is in no hurry to fight the man who beat Covey Rebuloso via a highly criticized unanimous decision in Las Vegas on Saturday.

"Let him wait for me," Mautista told Philboxing.com. "I'll face him after I have taken care of Sergio Medina on May 5."

Mautista (22-0, 17 KOs) and

ANSWERS, A24

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Baculi wary of Harbour-RP's Champions Cup rivals

By Jasmine W. Payo

THE QUALITY OF THE OPPOSITION awaits the Philippine team coach hired basically as he prepares in name today the national selection to the Southeast Asian Basketball Association (Stanbic) Champions Cup next month.

"We're very wary," Baculi said the other day after concluding the three-day tryout for the PBL selection that will carry the Harbour Centre-RP team banner in the Jakarta club event from April 9 to 12.

"I think my problem right now is we do not have the luxury of scouting their imports. Malaysia has an American coach, so they might get good imports and we're not sure who they are. Thailand also has an American coach."

The Stanbic tournament, the country's first regional stint in two years, allows teams to field two imports each.

"We're really trying our best to send the best possible imports and the best possible PBL players," said Baculi.

The veteran mentor also added host Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand as the top contenders in the tournament that serves as qualifier for the Fiba-Asia Champions Cup to close this September.

Baculi will announce the official line-up today at the PSA Sports Forum in the company of PBAP Commissioner Rudolph Pinpin, president Manny V. Pangilinan, team financier and Harbour Centre owner Mikee Romero, PBL commissioner Chito Trinidad and chair Gil Segovia.

The Philippine Olympic Committee and the Philippine Sports Commission earlier gave their blessing to the national team's participation in its first regional competition after the Fiba International basketball federation lifted on Feb. 22 the country's suspension from international tournaments.

"I believe that if we bring our best available amateur players, we have a pretty good chance of winning the tournament," said PSC chair William "Butch" Ramirez.

POC spokesperson Jose Romasanta is to recommended the PBL for adjusting its tournament calendar so its top players can join the SEP squad.

"It shows that everyone is willing to cooperate and sacrifice to attain one common goal," said Romasanta.

Expected to lead the SEP selection are JC Intal, Jimmy Alapag, Chris Lutz, Jeff Chan, Jimwell Huang, Mervin Cruz, Derrick Cabahug, Al Magpayo and Larry Rodriguez.

Julius Nwosu, 6-5-foot-10 former NBA hatch-up center who already saw action as a PBA import, had been tapped to beef up the young team.

FOR U.S. TRIP

Chot makes do with 11 cagers

By Marcus R. Castillo

CHOT REYES SAYS HE WOULD LOVE TO have Kelly Williams in the Philippine team, but Fonda's star has visiting stars out of it until with his PBA team, Sta. Lucia Realty.

"We don't know how healthy it would be (for Sta. Lucia) if we pull him (Williams) out at this time," Reyes said at the end of an energized three-hour practice session yesterday at the Meralco Lucena gym in Iyanka Heights, Quezon City.

Besides, we're just trying to rush things. We'll make the final decision when we get back from the 11-match tours."

Reyes said he would likely take just 11 players with him to Los Angeles for a grueling two-week training camp that begins at the end of the month after Rudy Hatfield bagged off from joining the team. The Barangay Ginebra players replacement has not been named.

The team departs for California on March 29 and will stay there for 14 days.

They will return for the PBA all-star break, poised to join for the Asian Champions Cup from May 5 to 14, before competing in the Southeast Asian Basketball Association championship which they are expected to win in Thailand.

Reyes said that Yeb Barois would have taken Hatfield's spot, but the Gordon center is set to go under the knife today to fix a shoulder injury.

While Reyes had named Beaver and newcomer big men at strategic—Enrico Villanueva and Jamesmel Adduru—Jayson Castro "depth charge" role position originally for Hatfield—declared Ivy Bonito first, Williams second and three other Marc Pingris or Anthony Washington.

Meanwhile, Mark Caguioa joined the team practice for the first time yesterday, like with a little off after a three-week layoff but was in high spirits despite leaving his shit mother in the States.

"I would have wanted to take care of her for a longer time," Caguioa told the boysters. "But I do as would like to come home and show everyone that I love playing for my country."

LTEN HAAT: Sta. Lucia has final say on Kelly Williams (left). AUGUSTO SALVADOR

Chandler reinforces Purefoods tomorrow

MANJOHN CHANDLER WENT THROUGH the required height measurement for imports at the PBA office yesterday and will suit up for Purefoods when it battles another winless side in San Miguel Beer in the Fiesta Conference tomorrow.

At 6 feet, 3 and ½ inches, Chandler will be the tallest import in the tournament when he takes the place of the ineffective Jesse King in the 7:30 p.m. game scheduled at the Araneta Coliseum in Cubao, Quezon City.

"I have no doubt but we'll win," said Purefoods coach Ryan Gregorio of Chandler, who has yet to fully recover from his NBA stint.

The Tender Andy Giants have dropped their first three games, all in lopsided style, with the furthest coming on Friday opposite Sta. Lucia, 95-132, where King was held to just four points.

Chandler was the first import award in this tournament last year, scoring 20 James Penny of Alaska.

But the Giants will never score as many for them, providing it on thrilling games.

Chandler, whose stint with the Giants was his first professional exposure after coming out of college, has been in his country since the start of the tournament but has been kept in the bench as he underwent rehab from his injury.

The Boomers have also lost their first three games—and in every night manner—with first import Vidal Mentoh proving to be a big disappointment and his replacement, Paul McMillan, failing to show that he is better.

In Lucas del Molino on Saturday, the Boomers absorbed their fourth loss as Coke Tigers, 82-64, with McMillan scoring only 11 points and committing a tournament-record nine turnovers. —Marcus R. Castillo

Boom Boom keen on fighting Ponce de Leon

From page A24

Mendoza (28-3, 16 KOs) will step in out under-sends the Oscar De La Hoya-Floyd Mayweather superbout dubbed "The World Awaits," with the winner earning the right to challenge Pretty de Leon.

Color spectrum. Antonio T. Aldapave, Bautista's benefactor, says the presence of about his award's chances against the Mexican world champion.

"I have no doubt Boom Boom will win over Ponce de Leon," Aldapave said. "I have so many of his fights on video."

Besides, along with Alex John Bunal, another unbeaten Filipino fighter, is set to depart for Puerto Rico, via Los Angeles, later this month to hook up with trainer Freddie Roach and De La Hoya.

Meanwhile, Ponce de Leon (31-1, 26 KOs) admitted he was surprised by Peñalosa's tough stand.

"It was a much tougher fight than I expected," Ponce de Leon said in the post-fight press conference.

"He was a smaller guy and we underestimated him and never very confident we would take care of him, it was a learning experience. I learned, you can't always knock them out. It was good to go 12 rounds. It was a learning experience but I proved I can box, too."

Ponce de Leon then added that he would want to be the winner of the bout between Bautista and Mendoza.

—Arlene J. Lagumbay, Contributor

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PSA Fistiana sports new look

CLEAN LIVING

Manuel B. Iñigo

I WELCOME THE GOOD NEWS THAT THE Philippine Sportswriters Association under the stewardship of Eldrin Cardenas of the Tribune will revive the PSA Hoops Fistiana benefit basketball game on April 29 at the Rajah Sulayman Park in Manila.

Supporting the annual display are sports luminaries as Manila Sports Council head Arnold "Al" Alonzo, a former Milo taekwondo champion, and Games and Amusements Board chair Eric Buhain, a formidable swimmer during his time.

Premiere Bombo Radyo has been tapped by the PSA president to prepare a shindang and co-pubilled by the elite debuts of Philippine light flyweight champion Jonny Boy Jaro against challenger Alfred Kapal.

The fund-raising event is being revived this year not only to promote local boxing but also to help the country's destitute, disabled and retired boxers.

For instead of giving out cash, as had been the practice in the past, Ali and the GAB will dole out livelihood projects this time. Ali, through his father, Mayor Lim Atienza, will also provide the venue, security and cash prizes.

Republic Act No. 1372, passed in 1955, authorizes the Philippine Sportswriters Association to hold one benefit boxing show every year, the net proceeds of which constituting a trust fund for the benefit of disabled Filipino boxers. It was authored by the late Serafin Salvador, a Iliad congressman who had a passion for boxing and a big heart for his Filipino brethren.

The Fiesta Hoopers became a popular boxing show, most especially in the 1960s. However, it was overshown by events. Then in 1998, Speaker Jose de Venecia and former Deputy Speaker Raul Daza, a diehard boxing aficionado who is now the governor of Northern Samar, helped revive this worthy undertaking under by-term as PSA president.

In that PSA Fistiana, seven-day-die Ben Medina of Cagayan de Oro upset highly favored American Cedric Kingsley on a 10-round TKO to seize the World Boxing Federation featherweight title.

Incidentally, the benefit card raised a substantial amount. The biggest one on record by the rowdy boxers. More importantly, the PSA subsidized the proceeds to an audit by the accounting firm Sycip Gorres Velayo and Co., setting a good example for all fund-raisers.

The SGV audit was well received and elicited a favorable response from all sectors, including the major sponsors such as San Miguel Corp., Philippine Long Distance Co., Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. and Philippine Airlines.

In 1999, popular boxing champion Manny Pacquiao fought in the main event at the PSA Fistiana and was crowned a second-round knockout of Reynante Jamili. Former world champ Gerry Peñalosa also appeared in the 2001 fistiana.

"We're no longer giving money this year," said the 36-year-old Atienza. "Boy negotiating boxing guys are bigger name and media [it's] difficult to get them. Boxing-related projects because we're more money hungry in the past who squandered their dole."

Incorporate returns with the staging of the second round of the 2007 Southeast Asian Games and the SWCPI 1st Quarter Ranking and Geographic Classification Tournament.

Held under the auspices of the Dinner Sport Council of the Philippines, Inc., SWCPI president Rocky Garcia said that athletes from all over the country are competing in both Latin and Standard dancesport events.

For, International Dance Sport Federation-licensed adjudicators from Europe and Asia will act as judges in the blue-ribbon dancefest sponsored by Alaska Fil. Beverage Corp., Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, Philippine Sports Commission, Philippine Olympic Committee, Bgosi, 7/23 Alex, Blake Zone, Isha Shangri-la Hotel, Savannah Moon, Shuttles Infinite, Zen Institute and Studio 18.

Assisting Ms Garcia organize the affair are members of the SWCPI board comprised of Lucy Lucas, chairman; lawyer Josefina de Vera-Salita, secretary general; Gloria Alcala, treasurer and directors lawyer Andy Fuentes, Marvin Calanog-on-Mike, Ambassador Antonio Lagdameo, Edward Reyes, Rubi Go, Cleon Mercado, Annette Rivadeneira, Emma Nieto, Rebecca Arce, Cristalle Bautista and Victoria Mir.

Tickets are available at the Dinner Sport Training Center, Philsports Complex, Mandaluyong, Pasig City. For other inquiries, call Annie Lolos at 635-01-36.

NBA STANDINGS

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New Jersey	33	44
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Philadelphia	20	61
Boston	20	60
CENTRAL DIVISION	**W**	**L**
Detroit	44	22
Cleveland	42	23
Chicago	38	29
Indiana	32	35
Milwaukee	25	41
WESTERN CONFERENCE		
SOUTHEAST DIVISION	**W**	**L**
Washington	36	30
Miami	35	30
Orlando	34	31
Atlanta	28	41
Charlotte	24	43
SOUTHWEST DIVISION	**W**	**L**
Dallas	49	17
Denver	43	23
Minnesota	38	27
Seattle	39	27
Portland	29	40
PACIFIC DIVISION	**W**	**L**
Phoenix	50	16
LA Lakers	40	33
Golden State	39	33
LA Clippers	32	38
Sacramento	29	37
SOUTHWEST DIVISION	**W**	**L**
Dallas	49	17
San Antonio	43	23
Houston	40	25
New Orleans/Oklahoma	29	37
Memphis	17	50

Kobe follows 65 with 50

Lakers overpower T'Wolves

LAKERS superstar Kobe Bryant slam dunks against the Timberwolves in Los Angeles on Sunday.

LOS ANGELES—KOBE Bryant took center—again.

Bryant became the first Lakers player with consecutive 50-point games in 44 seasons, following a 65-point game with 50 against the Minnesota Timberwolves on Sunday in Los Angeles' 109-102 NBA victory.

"We talked about going to Kobe each in games and not waiting," coach Phil Jackson said. "He had been playing the home role—being the game out and waiting 'til the second half to get going. But there's just enough times right now to the season to throwing that."

Bryant became the first Lakers player with consecutive games of 50 or more points since December 1962, when Elgin Baylor did it in three straight games.

He scored 24 points in the first 8:12 to help Los Angeles build a 17-point lead.

"I'm just being more aggressive at both ends of The Bout," Bryant said. "At this point in the season, it's important that I assess the state of urgency that we have to have, and the type of emotion and energy that you have to play with."

Only two other players have recorded back-to-back 50-point games in the last 40 years, Antawn Jamison did it in December 2005 against Seattle and the Lakers (51-31), and Allen Iverson did it in December 2004 against Milwaukee and Utah (54-41).

It was Bryant's 19th career 50-point game, including Game 6 of the Lakers' first-round playoff series against Phoenix last May. They are 1-18 (.053) when he scores 50 points, but are straight in 12-5 when he scores 40 or more.

The Lakers' two games before Bryant's spree were a 108-72 loss to Dallas—the Lakers' most lopsided defeat on home court since the franchise relocated from Minneapolis—and a 27-point drubbing at Denver. Last season's NBA scoring champ credits the return of Lamar Odom and Luke Walton from injuries for making these last two games possible.

"Luke and Lamar both make my life a lot easier when they're out there because they're so good at recognizing situations out the floor," Bryant said. "They're good passers, so teams can't just front me or overplay me in certain areas. I think we as a team understand that in certain situations, they're just so talented that it makes it difficult to double myself."

After shooting 23-for-48 from the field in Friday's overtime victory against Portland, Bryant was 17-for-35 against the Timberwolves (7-for-9 making three in the 1998 straight outfit).

Minnesota "held" the All-Star MVP to 40 points on March 5 in a double-overtime victory.

Tonight's tilt:

@ Lakers (40)Minnesota (32) Jamison 10 Gomes 11 Telfair 10 Foshee 10 Tsintsadze 11 Jianlian 10 Green 10 Boozer 18 Bracey 15 Miles Jones 19 Ukic 6 Ollie 8 Blount 11.

Miles on TV Today

Foul—Foshee 6,BOOZER 3 eight-of-9 a-m and 9:30a m ap

Gators claim Sweet 16 slot

NEW YORK—FLORIDA MOVED CLOSER TO a second consecutive championship by defeating Purdue 74-67 Sunday to advance to the Sweet 16 in the NCAA Tournament.

Junior Al Horford and Corey Brewer each scored 17 points to lead the Midwest Region top seed over Purdue, a physical team that had thrown of an upset until the last few minutes.

"I think we knew coming into the game that it was going to be very, very physical," said Horford, a 6-foot-9 forward.

White Plains (31-13) advanced to a third, record showdown with Butler to the regional semi-finals, second-seeded Wisconsin was stunned by number seven Nevada Las Vegas 73-68 behind 22 points by senior guard Mike Bell.

Florida (32-5) improved to 10-0, the school's first 30-win season since the 1998-99 team advanced to Final Four. Next up is number-three seed Oregon, a 75-61 winner over Winthrop.

Reuters

Nadal aims for another grand slam

INDIAN WELLS, CALIFORNIA—FACING Lleyton Hewitt in the Australian Open quarterfinals, Rafael Nadal believes he is ready to win more tournaments on surfaces other than clay for on the days.

The 20-year-old Spaniard heads to the Sony Ericsson Open in Miami full of confidence after beating Novak Djokovic on Sunday to win his first title since June and with world number one Roger Federer firmly in his sights.

Federer's 4-1 match winning streak was ended by Argentine Guillermo Canas at Indian Wells and Nadal was left advantage, knocking out top Americans Andy Roddick in the semis and easing off Djokovic, 6-2, 7-5, in the final.

"Right now I see number two and Roger is number one and he away from the others," Nadal told reporters. "Roger is the best in history. For sure, my goal is to continue winning tournaments. But now to go to number one is very difficult, and I am not thinking about that if I play like this, I can win another major."

Nadal had not reached a final since losing to Federer at Wimbledon last year but he has reached least on his all-around game, particularly his serve.

"When you are not winning, you're thinking, 'Yeah, I need only one title,'" he said. "I was playing bad in Toronto and Cincinnati but I played quarterfinals in the US Open, quarterfinals in Madrid and semifinals in Shanghai even though I was playing not a bad format. In tournaments, quarter finals too, I wasn't winning, but I was always there.

"Sometimes you're a little bit luckier and have a little more confidence. I wasn't exhausted."

Nadal holds an 11-0 record in finals and still owns a 6-3 career win-loss record against the 25-year-old Federer, who had only won three titles by the age of 20.

"I have a good record," Nadal said. "I know it's early in the season but I'm just getting here the chance for a title to be important. My goal is to continue to have fun like this and to try to win more, or grand slams."

Reuters

RAFAEL Nadal: Full of confidence.

Quezon battles Valencia in NBC

QUEZON CITY—EXPOSITION TEAM QUEZON Hills Andre begins a three-game road trip in Manchester today by facing Valencia tonight. Barrera in the 2007 NBC National Cup basketball tournament here.

Quezon City Mayor Herbert Bautista's supporters are expected to bounce back from a heartbreaking 75-74 loss to Pagadian in the 7 p.m. contest. But host Golden Harvest is bent on making a big start to the tournament.

Mayor Jose Celerio de Valencia squad will provide an almost intact lineup plus some rewards for bookings. Jason Melquiades and Meng Magdaleno.

The rest of Arthur Bautista, Ron Cruz and Jimbo Rodolfo of the New Manila Bruins will have a crucial supporting cast this time as Valencia hopes to make it to the nine-team semis.

AMIL Bonifacio (right) teams with Mahrez Indiva Asty Villanueva (left) and Tito Palma.

"Management has formed a solid team," said team consultant Ben Oro. "We're looking for result in favorable results."

Coach Nick Tapia's main concern is how to stop six-per Byron Gabol, who has been averaging 16 points per game for Quezon.

Two other six-pers—Raul Ramonarez and Robin Mendoza—are clocking up 6.0/60.

He has Sydney Golding/Del Tagaytay team on top of the heap with 10-0 (sic), followed by Pagadian (2-1) and Quezon (1-1).

Grand slam champion Hiramit Cotts, Bigas and Montana Pinamalayan Davao are the other teams which have run over 500.

Meanwhile, the NBC announced its partnership with Meiko's through its marketing arm Gatfe Marketing.

Noble Marketing president Asty Villanueva said NBC executive general Tito Palma sealed the deal with Sonic Trading's managing director Atul Read.

Singh finally wins at Palmer's place

ORLANDO, FLORIDA—VIJAY Singh kept trotting in the silver trophy from the Arnold Palmer Invitational, beating 8 eights at the par-four 16th hole to make sure his career was finally on the list of champions.

Even then, it was not how Singh had been used to before.

Singh had been expected to win PGA for 15 years. He had left with nothing but three runner-up finishes and plenty of heartache. There was that bogey-bogey finish in 1994 to Lenny Roberts; the Tiger Woods miracle chip-in at the 16th two years ago to lose to Kenny Perry.

He made sure that wouldn't happen on Sunday.

Singh closed so well in the middle that it didn't matter how hard it got in the end. Even with a bogey-bogey par finish, the 44-year-old Fijian still matched the best score of the final round with a 3-under 67 that gave him a two-shot victory over Retief Goosen.

Singh, who finished at 6-under 272, became the first multiple winner on the U.S. PGA Tour this year. He had 69 career victories but tied with Harry Cooper of England with the most by a foreign-born player.

Mediate made three clutch putts seven-to-keep alive his hopes, only to find trouble on the 18th for a bogey and a 69.

Hughie Tinley, who had a two-shot lead going into the final round, didn't make a birdie until the 13th hole, the only other birdie came on the 18th hole. He finished third, two shots behind Singh and Goosen.

Tiger Woods delivered a dramatic finish, but not the kind anyone expected.

His chances ended with a three-putt double bogey on the 14th hole, and then a bad day got even worse. Woods hit his tee shot into the water on the par-3 17th and made double bogey. After his drive on the 18th ended up in the left rough on the 18th, he hit his third into the water and made triple bogey for a 41 on the back nine.

He closed with a 76, his highest score in a regular U.S. PGA Tour event since a 76 in the third round of the Memorial Tournament last year. Woods wound up tied for 22nd, matching his streak of 13 straight top 10s worldwide, nine of them on the U.S. tour.

Woods left the course without comment.

AP

SINGH

SPORTSWATCH

Casino Filipino 'TC' golf tees off today

MORE THAN 100 INVITED PLAYERS WILL SEE ACTION IN THE 2007 Casino Filipino Tournament of Champions when GSM Golf Links tees off today at the West course of Rizal Wack Golf and Country Club in Muntinlupa City. Shotgun start—8:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. The event, which will be participated by top officials of the Philippine Government and Gaming Corp. Players and participants, is one of the highlights of this year's Asian Gaming Entertainment—Leisure Expo Manila. Tons of prizes and the grand trophies will be given to the lucky winners during dinner. The one-day competition is co-sponsored by the Pagcor Golf Club headed by Pagcor president and CEO Rafael "Rafa" Francisco, together with Asian GRE and Tourism Foundation and Bayanodoy's Trophies and Sculptures.

Last 'Rambulan' elims at SJC tomorrow

COACHES AND SPECTATORS OF TICKET MEN'S BASKETBALL MOMENT participating DIVISION the Manila-wide "Rebel Basketball" records derby at San Juan Gymnasium. Hosts Rodolfo Pineda and Ralph Recto said the last day of elimination matches will be held tomorrow. Games start at 8:30 a.m. with the Rebels vs. Cubao Cagers at 10:30 a.m. Cubao must be defeated today to force Zaza, 8-6, p.m. For inquiries, call 725-5369, 725-4500, 997-1000 or 997-8000 loc. 107 qualifiers will meet Greenhills Cockpit, Mariano Marcos Sports Center, Juan Gatpuyen, Mandaluyong Cockpit, Pangasinan Coliseum, Quezon Cockpit Arena and Olivas. Nine Sports Arena.

TOP THREE: Overall winner Chris Perasior of Australia (center), runner-up Samuel Larrson of the US (left) and Filipino third placer Gerrison Pez show their prizes at the awards rites of the recent 18th Batangas International Pentasport Cup. Fifty-two triathletes and 24 bike outfits from 13 countries took part in the competition.

USC-North five overpowers Don Bosco for Visayas title

CEBU CITY—THE OPPOSED OFFcered trio of Ray Amelo, John Delantar and Bryan Gonzales shone at University of San Carlos-North Campus outlasted Don Bosco College, 21-7, Sunday to capture the Visayas title of the 2007 Cheller Tangkad Pagod Basketball Tournament at the Don Bosco Technology School in Barangay Punta Princesa.

Amelo impressed with 11 points with Pajantay and Gonzales contributing 4 apiece to power the USC squad to victory in the best-of-three title series. Jaypee supported by adults. Louie Ardiente Lapid quintet found 10 other individuals.

Product manager Ian Montero, tournament director Ace Badolato, organizer Bernard Oconpo and prizes director Jun Bernos awarded the trophies and medals.

Lloyd, Victor make pool

LLOYD REYNANTE AND VICTOR Espiritu are bound to return to the national pool of cycling for road after averaging 1:2 in last month's time of a series of whatnot books ordered for the national federation for sport, triathlon.

Reynante topped the manual start and individual time trial of the mixed with field, simultaneously with Tagaytay City Mayor Bambol Tolentino's annual Pinoy ng Bay Bay event to secure the maximum 40 points (20 points for first place per event). Espiritu, a former Tour champ, was second with 37 points.

The other members in the top 10 were Jake Balbuco (29 points), Dante Ramos (26), Amel Quesada (24), Bernel Bendijo (20), Trent Bonilla (17), Benson Olivas (15), and Ilocos with Delantar (13). Roberto Gatdula was ended up with 10 points, but he could no longer make the automatic pool because he is already 26.

Woman accuses Arwind of abandoning her, child

By Jane Navarro

SANTOS: Denies

A CRIMINAL CASE OF abandonment has been filed against Arwind Santos by a woman who claims to be his wife.

Karyn Alyse Abaya lodged the complaint at the sala of presiding judge Florencio Andaya of the Batangas City Regional Trial Court Branch 1.

The woman accused the former UAAP MVP of deserting her and their one-year-old child.

She claimed that the former ba Eastern University cadman has failed to provide their financial support ever since the RP Basketball Association cager left their conjugal home on Carson Street in Gonzalez Manila, on Dec. 5, 2005.

Prior to the filing of the abandonment case, Karyn Abaya also sought the court's help in directing Santos to provide her a monthly support of P50,000, plus health insurance, educational plans and associated for the child.

Karyn Abaya, who was represented by lawyer Erwin Aguilar, also asked for P75,000 in attorney's fees, plus P2,500 for every court hearing.

Aguilar will hear the support case on Thursday. He entered a plea of not guilty to Santos' behalf during the arraignment of the case two weeks ago.

In her petition, Karyn Abaya said they tried to work out a compromise with Santos so as to avoid having her to file the case on July 20 but could the manifestations ever reach the court.

Karyn Abaya argued, it wanted to file a case for violation of Republic Act 9262, known as the Anti-Violence against Women and their Children Act of 2004, against Santos but was prevailed upon by his prosecutors Loreto Cornel Castillo, who recommended the filing of the abandonment case instead.

Atty. Castillon and team manager Jun Alegre said the team management would extend legal assistance to Santos, a mid-cager in the Espree lineup.

BUSINESS

Editor Raul D. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Corrie S. Mariano

91-day T-bill rate inches up to 2.998%

Treasury rejects bids for 1-year securities

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE AVERAGE YIELD ON THE BENCHMARK 91-day treasury bill rate yesterday went up for the second straight week since hitting historical lows, rising to 2.998 percent from 2.935 percent dur-

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■ BAP sets new benchmarks for bond trading rates /B2

■ San Miguel seen to post 3-10% growth in '06 /B3

■ Clark airport starts P150-M expansion /B5

Foreign chambers push for open skies

By Bernard W. Dominguez

FOREIGN BUSINESS GROUPS ARE URGING Malacañang to establish liberal aviation measures, which they said were crucial for the Bombardier-designed International Airport to become a passenger and logistics hub in the region.

The Joint Foreign Chambers of Commerce of the Philippines (JFC) said in a statement they supported efforts on the continued development of the Clark airport as one of the premier hubs in Asia. (See related story on page B6-1

JFC members include the American, Australia-New Zealand, Canadian, European, Japanese and Korean chambers and the Philippine Association of Multinational Companies Regional Headquarters.

ME, JFC pushes for President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to issue an executive order that defines rules on traffic rights in Clark as well as in the Subic International Airport.

There is already a such a draft order, which is to be EO 500-B, that will allow the easier entry of airline services, especially low cost carriers.

"The draft order effectively privatize EO 500, A... issued in August 2006... that practically rescinded the "open skies" policy spelled out in EO 500 issued January 2006.

"To sustain long-term policy stability and ensure growth and investment, we strongly recommend the adoption of EO 500-B as endorsed by the Philippine Export&Investment Council," [illegible]

FOREIGN B2

CURRENCIES

[illegible]

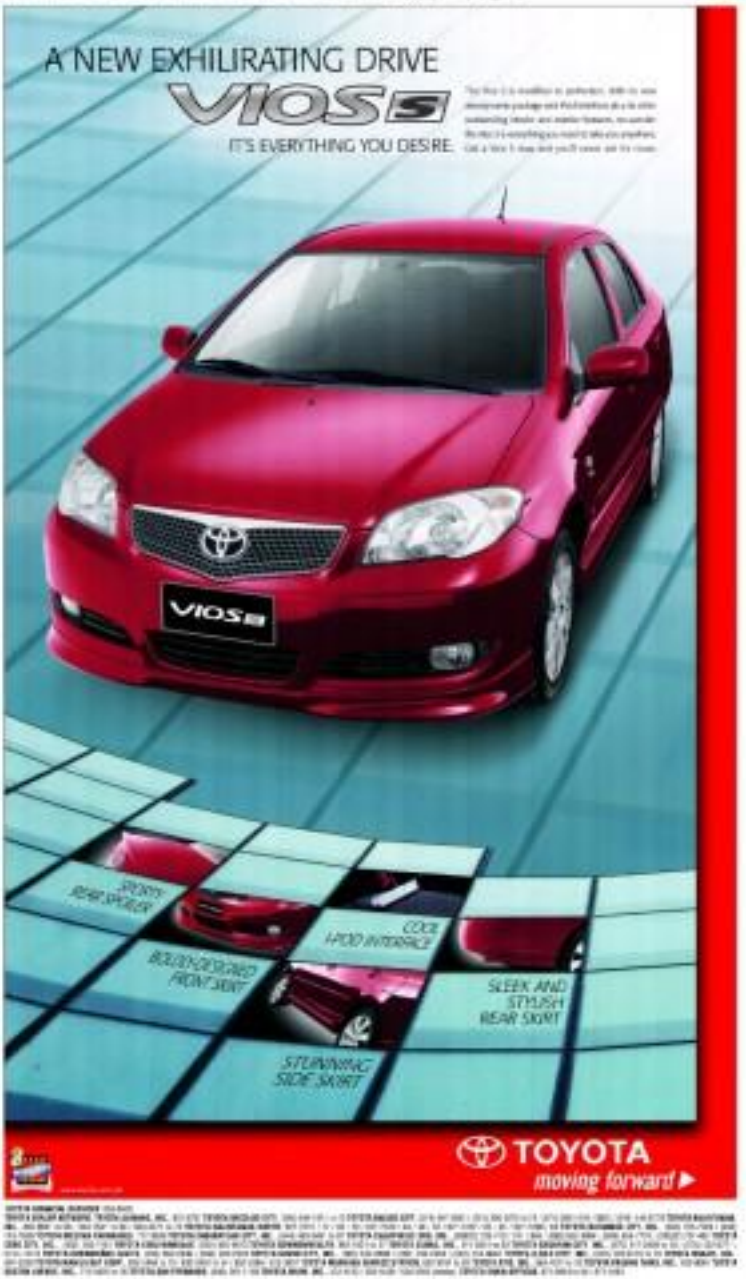
STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

[illegible]

Stocks close lower

[illegible]



BOND TRADING

BAP sets new benchmarks

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE GOOD SAMSON SYSTEM TESTERONE dubbed to a new benchmark for bond trading based on done rates or actual transactions—a new system without beware for any possible price-fixing, regulators and industry leaders said.

In line with the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' memorandum dated Feb. 20 requiring banks to use done rates in marking to market valuations, the Bankers Association of the Philippines spearheaded the establishment of the new benchmarks for peso-denominated government securities that will be administered by the association's fixed income exchange unit Philippine Dealing & Exchange Corp. (PDEX), a self-regulating organization.

With the adoption of the new benchmarks, Bankers Treasurer Oscar Cruz said the banking system was implementing the benchmarks already established by the govern-ment's recent bond swaps wherein it swapped out thinly traded issues by offering new bonds in exchange for the dominant ones.

"It's difficult to manipulate the market first with a lot of trades," Cruz said, noting that benchmark two-, three-, five-, six- and seven-year bonds were now being traded at about 91 billion per year in the secondary market.

BAP however demands changes in said the shift in done rates from the earlier Mart1 benchmarks, which were based solely on bid-ask bids, would prevent acquisition of the counterparties with bond price-setting.

He earlier cautioned that the BAP had warned some banks in relation to the alleged price-fixing that happened during the height of the unit investment trust fund (UITF) meltdown last year, but did not elaborate. Other BAP sources said 20 commercial banks were reprimanded because of that incident wherein some traders were suspected of intervening in MART1 price setting in order to cushion the losses managed by their banks from sharp devaluations caused by the fallen bond prices.

"What's good is that since these are actual transactions, you're not just looking at one side of the quotes. It will help improve valuations because of the actual prices," BAP executive director Leonilo Coronel said.

He said as the rules serve a bit loose and unclear in the past such that those implicated by the BSP in the price-fixing issue might even get off free, but under the new regime, he said there was no room for such a scandal to arise again.

Under PDEX, he said price discovery for the secondary trading of bonds would be more transparent.

"The guardian of the benchmark is the [PDEX] on those until he rules that will be followed, sanctions and penalties to be imposed on violators. The benchmarks will have more integrity," Coronel said.

"The MART1 formula will still continue because where the new benchmark is based on done rates, if there's no volume in such benchmark point, it will revert to a formula like MART1," Coronel said.

The new marking to market benchmarks adopted by the banks starting yesterday were now based on actual done deals in the post-GF (government securities) benchmark market, let the absence of done deals, they will be based on the best firm bid.

These new benchmarks are meant to address the BSP's call for improved transparency and reliability of marking to market eval-uation to promote investor confidence.

Meanwhile, in order to ensure continuity for existing contracts until their expiry or maturity, to preclude profit and loss discrepancies for outstanding parties, as well as provide disruptions such as hedging, ineffectiveness under international accounting Standard (IAS) 39, the new benchmarks include an equivalent of the old best bids-based method, adopt under MART1, which the BSP will allow banks to continue using even after the transition, for existing transactions and contracts.

91-day T-bill rate inches up to 2.998%

From page B1

situation where yields are lower than the in-flation rate—would not be sustainable and be a disincentive to savings and investments.

National Treasurer Omar Cruz said the increase in treasury bill rates for the 91- and 182-day bills were just within market expectations and reflected trading rates in the secondary market.

Moreover, he said the bids for 364-day bills were all rejected for the second consecutive week as these were "above-entry bids" as the banks sought rates that were way off those prevailing in the secondary market.

Cruz added that there was no appetite for the 364-day bills because there was P1.8 billion worth of bond maturities that the market could easily divert to higher-yielding and more liquid new peso treasury bonds.

During yesterday's auction, the offering for 91-day bills—the rate of which is used by banks as benchmark in pricing loans—was nearly six times oversubscribed. The Treasury not only awarded the original P600 million of-fering in full, it also accepted additional tenders worth P300 million.

There are likewise a full award of the P1.5 billion offering for the 182-day bills that was nearly four times oversubscribed, while rejected tenders for the 364-day bills amounted to P3.015 billion.

"Short-term yields have bottomed out in the primary market. In the secondary market, yields have crept slightly upward and the downward trend may be temporarily postponed," said the Capital Market Analyst, a publication of the First Metro Investment Corp. said the Underwriting of Banks and the Dealer Capital Markets Research Center.

But the publication's bond outlook said that despite the recent global volatility solid spikes in interest rates were not likely as inflation has moderated in four-out-four 2.6 percent.

Moreover, investors in the government's fixed position, which put fiscal managers in good position to slash borrowings, have also lengthened any sharp uptick in short-term yields.

Last week, the national government announced a new month's budget deficit of P 16.6 billion, which was well within the quarterly deficit ceiling of P45.4 billion.

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Foreign chambers push for open skies

From page B1

JFC said.

The group said that in 2006 when open skies took effect for the greater part of the year, about 160,000 passengers arrived at the DMIA.

"This is an increase of at least 110 pre-cent from the 225,000 passengers that arrived in 2005," JFC said.

Flights of Asiana Airlines, Air Asia, Hong Kong Airways and Tiger Airways transport increasing numbers of tourists and businessmen from Hong Kong, Korea, Malaysia and Singapore, JFC added.

"These flights would be necessary to develop the Philippines or Cebu as a destination for medical tourism purposes and retirees," the group said.

"Several new hotels are being built at Clark to meet the growing demand for visitors, tourists," it added. "The increasing number of airline options also provides opportunities for Filipinos to travel overseas abroad to resort hotels or flights directly to General Luna, Siargao."

JFC said that since 1993, 20 air services agreements with other countries provide for designated carriers to fly to and from Clark, but these airlines have not taken the opportunity.

"In the absence of such services to Clark, the legal fundamentals for such services to Clark can provide the protocols of bilateral agreements should continue and be regularized," JFC said.

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• Radio frequency remote operates most popular functions on other infrared-receiving equipment in your home entertainment system.
uMusic
ADAPTIQ
It performs like no other.
FREE Wave® Music System
FREE SoundDock® Digital Music System

SMC seen to have posted 3-10% growth in 2006

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

SAN MIGUEL CORP. THE COUNTRY'S largest food and beverage firm, is expected to book a modest profit growth of between 3 percent and 10.7 percent for 2006, according to analysts polled by the Inquirer.

That will translate to a net profit of between P9.2 billion and P10 billion, up from P9.05 billion in 2005.

Analysts said sales from San Miguel's domestic beer business as well as from its agricultural operations—dairy, feed, Animal Feeds and auto makers Ford Lio—were expected to boost the parent firm's 2006 revenues.

San Miguel's food liquor unit Ginebra San Miguel Inc., however, incurred high raw materials due to surging prices of molasses and higher excise taxes that pushed liquor prices up.

"We are seeing a reversal for Ginebra this year because sugar prices are trending down. That should be a boost to operating margins. We also see a slight increase in net liquor volumes as consumers are already used to the price adjustment," AFP Inc. Investment analysts Jimmy Sinsuat said.

The Coca-Cola Beverage Group—which includes soft drinks and other non-coffee and beverages sales measurement difficulties in lifting sales and revenues due to higher costs of packaging materials, such as glass and plastic bottles.

Sales volume for the Coke group dropped 12 percent in the third quarter from a year earlier because of stiff competition from carbonated and non-carbonated beverages products.

In the third quarter, the Coke group accounted for 15 percent of San Miguel's total revenues and 6 percent of operating income.

The Coca-Cola Beverage Group's consumer's drinks include Coca-Cola, Coca-Cola Light, Sprite Light, Royal Tru-Orange, Barq's, Root Beer, Schweppes Tonic Water, Rip Cola and Sura.

Its products also include William distilled drinking water, Vital mineral water, Real distilled drinking water, and ready-to-drink and powdered juice and tea drinks, such as Right C-Juice, Powerade, Nestea, Magnolia fruit drinks, Minute juice, Fruitmate Zip juice drinks, Robinsons and Iced Cafe Mix.

Last month, San Miguel signed the deal enabling its entire 65 percent in Coca-Cola Bottlers Philippines Inc. (CCBPI) to The Coca-Cola Company (TCCC) for $990 million. This is expected to boost the San Miguel group of brands performance this year.

By 1997, analysts expect the conglomerate to post a profit of P10.8 billion, exclusive of the proceeds from the Coke sale.

"This is because of increased consumer spending and improvement in the country's operating efficiencies arising from the integration of fractured foods and Liberal," Sinsuat said.

However, analysts said San Miguel's debt burden worth P155 billion (both in dollars and pesos) would constrain its bottom line growth, the company.

San Miguel is the third largest corporation in the country in terms of revenues, and the largest food and beverage conglomerate in Southeast Asia. San Miguel is engaged in the production, processing and marketing of its whole beverages and soft drinks, food and packaging products in the Philippines. As well as leading food and beverage operations in Australia.

PLDT, SMART WIN 6 GOLD QUILL AWARDS

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. and Smart Communications Inc. received six awards for exemplary communications programs during the Gold Quill Awards Philippines 2007 organized by the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC). The awards were received by the firms' public affairs exercised by Jesus Ivy, PLDT senior vice president for Corporate Communications; Jim M. Sembrano and media division senior manager Horacio A. Lontoc. PLDT and Smart public affairs head Ramon R. Isberto and PLDT media division executive Clarence P. Lucasmoro.

MNTC sees losses due to toll rate cut

By Rico T. Olchondra

MANILA NORTH TOLLWAYS CORP. (MNTC), WHICH HOLDS THE concession for North Luzon Expressway or NLEX, is expected to suffer losses due to lower toll rates this year, company president Jose de Jesus said.

"Our revenues are now about 5 percent lower than year-ago," he said. "For this year we will probably incur losses because of the reduction in toll rates."

MNTC posted a net income of P1.34 billion in the first nine months of 2006 compared to P1.382 billion in the first three quarters of 2005.

Despite the lower income, MNTC slashed toll rates by 11 percent in December 2006, ahead of a Jan. 1, 2007 schedule, to benefit holiday travelers. MNTC and Philippine Tollways Inc. also put a moratorium on fare increases until midterm development of the toll road was under the company's immediate.

While noting that their revenues were below target, De Jesus said the income level was enough to sustain operations and pay obligations like 14s and foreign exchange and inflation rates also continued the impact of the reduced toll rates on the fare.

Last year, 140,000 vehicles used NLEX daily. The number rose to 145,000 in the first two months of 2007.

De Jesus attributed the increase partly to the toll rate cut and said "the increase in volume of traffic partly made up for the loss of revenues due to the reduction."

"By end of next we are hoping the number to go to be 149,000. If we grow by 3 percent, we will be okay," he said.

De Jesus expressed optimism that despite the lower income expected from toll fees, the company would benefit from increasing tourism and business activities in Central and Northern Luzon.

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Aboitiz power project worth ₱2.8B gets perks

By Bonnie W. Domingo

THE BOARD OF INVESTMENTS has approved the granting of tax perks to an Aboitiz Jime's P2.86-billion project involving a 70 megawatt hydro power plant in Davao del Gur.

BOI did close that Aboitiz Trans Inc.'s project was approved today by agency with optimum duties for its hydro power facility in Bajada District in the province.

Project status, which the will-state national business it runs investable energy, enables developers to a tax holidays of up to six years, duty-free importation of capital goods and other fiscal and non-fiscal perks.

Under the 2006 Investment Priorities Plan, the project is qualified for incentives under the heading "Energy Power Generation," which lists projects that use indigenous and renewable energy resources such as biomass, waste-to-energy conversion, solar, wind, geothermal, hydro and tidal waves.

Also, the project is included in the Power Development Plan 2004-2013 as endorsed by the Department of Energy.

The Bunggo plant would create 24 new jobs when fully operational, which is slated for 2010.

"The project, being a run-of-river type will produce electricity from a renewable resource without constructing a dam or impounding reservoir, avoiding's only a low earth embankment and headpond," the BOI said.

"This means the activity will have a minimal environmental impact. As it would not be impacting land to generate electricity, it would also save foreign currency that would be needed to burn 149,000 barrels of oil a year," it added.

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NISSAN MANILA
NISSAN

Meralco to contest BIR ruling on overpaid tax

Period allowed for tax refund had lapsed, authorities say

By Abigail L. Ho

THE LOPEZ LED MANILA ELECTRIC Co. will contest before the Court of Tax Appeals a Bureau of Internal Revenue decision disallowing the power distributor from crediting in its 2002 taxable year the income tax it overpaid for 1999, amounting to P977 million.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, the diversified utility explained that the BIR's Large Taxpayers Division should let it carry over the P977 million worth of taxes to 2002.

But according to a provision in the National Internal Revenue Code (NIRC), tax refund claims may only be applied in the immediately succeeding year.

Meralco vice president and legal affair head Gil San Diego explained that the NIRC provision had already been superseded by a newer one, which said that such carry-overs could be credited in succeeding taxable years, without any prescription period or restrictions.

In making its decision, the BIR had said that the tax refund claim could only be made within a two-year prescription period.

But San Diego explained that, when the Supreme Court decision regarding Meralco's application of income tax charges as tax-exempt subsidies to customers first found in 2001, it was already too late to seek a tax refund for taxables were 2000 or 2001, as the books for both years had already been audited.

Since this was the case, income tax returns for 2000 and 2001 could no longer be altered, he said.

Besides, the carry-over period that the BIR cited as one of the reasons for disallowing the crediting of the P977 million in taxes was applicable only to tax refund claims and not to the amendment of income tax returns.

"When the Supreme Court's decision—allowing Meralco to refund to affected customers 16.7 centavos per kilowatt-hour during the billing period February 1993 to April 30, 2003—became final in 2003, it necessarily resulted to overpayment of income taxes estimated at that time at P8.9 billion," he explained.

"Logically, Meralco exercised its option to amend its income tax return for the year 1999, which was then still under audit by the BIR, to reflect an overpayment of income tax for that year in the sum of P977 million.

"This amount was carried over and credited to income tax liabilities for the year 2002," San Diego said.

As it had decided not to allow Meralco to carry over P977 million in overpaid income taxes for 1999, the BIR owes the power firm a preliminary assessment notice for more than P1.2 billion worth of taxes.

Fiscal well-being

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Bernal III

OH, NO, NOT THIS! OUR MOST TERrifying nightmare is coming true.

For the next elections—an epic doctoral thesis to answer the near-limitless fund-wise fund—they are actually talking about hard issues on the economy.

The next thing you know, they really will count the votes.

For the administration's Team Unity, anyway, the Debate is anthroning the campaign—as supposed "economic guiles" under this core administration of Gloriarroyo.

In a manner, the Genuine Opposition put out political ads, claiming that the gains were nothing but, well, senile "spins." You know, they were just lied.

From where I sit, however, the key to many of our economic problems basically went boot, from since the time of Erap, our "fiscal" well-being.

That is, of course, aside from our physical well-being, which is the biggest factor why we have been nano-producing bebes, one to another, at a double-digit clip.

From the "fiscal" side, other issues eroded to smaller (or aggravate) downsides, such as stock-market activity, peso-exchange rate or interest rates.

From businessman know, for instance, that the BIR collected more taxes last year, which allowed the government to borrow less and which, in turn, resulted in lower interest rates, which ultimately was good for business—and the government, too. (For the sake of This Series, I brought about savings in the government's debt service.)

Understandably, in the past we hated the supposed "economic gains" of this one administration, the GO took a crack at what it called the "tax burden."

The duh noted that the "tax burden" was 13.8 percent of GDP last year, from only 11.9 percent in 2000, which was the last year of the truncated Wrist Band Administration.

The GO ought to shoot whatever went the sub. They were out and out foolish.

Come on, you can hit this cute administration, in many other things, such as the lackadaisical privatization of Napocor, or the foreign chpe of 100 bona Gonzales de Belles.

But criticizing Gloriarroyo for bringing up the country's "tax effort" (term used by the IMF) is like saying that killing dengue-bearing mosquitoes is bad.

Sure, it's bad—for the mosquitoes. Gloriarroyo? Try again, but other is bad for the party-hearts it actually good for us.

In the tax take rose from 13.9 to 14.8 percent of GDP. This is actually good. During the time of former President Fidel "Sexa Libbe" Ramos, the ratio was 17 percent.

Remember that, instead of cutting down on spending to narrow the budget deficit, which would be bad for the economy, Erap Libbe actually collected more taxes.

If the GO had any item on the "tax burden" or "tax effort" (depending on which side you support), it must be that Gloriarroyo needed to raise up the ratio some more.

It's not the other way around, stupid!

That increase in "tax burden" was 1.0 percent of GDP more than, in 2003, for instance, we can spend P200 billion more on things like infrastructure, basic, classrooms and such!

Aay, that's the problem when dishonest, only billion-ever shoot campaigns.

* * *

Brutality, the past two years' gains of the peso against the dollar, as a rule of her, of our painful fiscal recovery, could be both bad and good.

The strong peso surely was bad for exporters and the families of OFWs. They got a lesser amount, in pesos, in exchanging the same amount of dollars.

But the peso's gains also helped businesses in showing some "book" profits.

For instance, the 2003 financial statements of a local airline (it's name escapes me...really!) showed that it booked some P500 million in "foreign-exchange gain."

Without the gain, according to stock market analysts, the airline would have posted a loss of about P125 million that year.

In other words, the airline did not actually make money from operations, despite all the "promo" campaigns for cheap tickets and all that.

The "profit" came from accounting magic, such as booking dollar the unissued airplane lease contracts at lower amounts, thanks to the peso appreciation.

Something like that.

* * *

HERE is the latest about our airport "misery index," starting with the late-ordered opening of the brand new terminal Nala 3, apparently because it was poorly built, although we should have found out in defects years ago.

The terminal should have been started operations 10 years ago, forgotten!

Anyway, the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (the one and only airport in Metro Manila) has only one runway.

Thanks to the "economic uprising" (note to GO: Spot it in quotation marks, okay?), one hour waiting time (i.e., delay) for aircraft taxiing is becoming more common.

That's because Nala has only one runway for all the commercial flights, for private aircraft and for everything else, such as "encroachment."

One reader complained to me that, just recently, her flight's take-off was delayed by more than seven hours.

And so, she asked me if I could any how that the Manila International Airport Authority (or Miaa) should require all those small aircraft to use "municipal airports."

Sorry, ma'am, there is no such thing in Manila.

* * *

IT was seems that Kapuso president Cyril del Callar was only anticipating higher power rates, when he recently agreed to sell the people in Mindanao down the river.

A private company called Lanao Hydro Development Corp. (LHDC) wants to operate the power plant project called "Agus II" in Lanao.

Now, Napocor signed a "swapping contract" with LHDC to sell the Agus 2 power at only P4.32 per kwh, or roughly double the present rate of only P2.18 per kwh.

Del Callar, in justifying the doubling of the price, said that the contract only reflected the future increase in power rates in Mindanao.

Yes, ma'am, but, the power rates are going to double? I thought that Gloriarroyo's order is to lower the power rates!

CRUMBLING
A Terracotta warrior replica is displayed to attract shoppers and tourists in Beijing. Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao warned that lending and investment were growing too fast, urging more be done to boost consumer spending. Consumers are reluctant to spend freely because of the crumbling Chinese welfare state, forcing many people to save for basics, such as education and health care. —

China urged to pursue sustainable development

BEIJING—CHINA MUST ADOPT A more sustainable model for development, Premier Wen Jiabao said, or risk serious environmental and economic fallout, state media yesterday quoted top officials as saying.

"The overall growth of the Chinese economy is targeting, but one of the worries is that we have paid too dear an environmental and resources price for such growth," the China Daily newspaper quoted national development chief Ma Kai as telling an economic forum in Beijing on Sunday.

China's scorching economy last year accounted for 15 percent of the energy consumed in the world to produce just 4.4 percent of global output, a situation that senior leaders said imperiled long-term economic prospects, the newspaper reported.

"Serious environmental and resources constraints, irrational industrial structure and development gaps between urban and rural areas, as well as between regions, make it imperative to accelerate change of the growth model to pursue of sustainable development," Vice Premier Zeng Peiyan told the two-day forum.

Zeng promised more reform of pricing mechanisms and tax incentives aimed at encouraging energy conservation.

China's economy grew by a robust-looking 10.7 percent last year, fueled by its massive export machine and investment growth.

For years, the ruling Communist Party pursued a growth-first policy, but has recently put addressing the negative effects of that policy on the environment, pollution, profligate energy consumption and a widening wealth gap—at the top of its political agenda. AFP

Oil prices rise in Asian trade on strong gasoline demand

SINGAPORE—OIL PRICES YESTERDAY turned higher in Asian afternoon trade, finding support on strong gasoline demand in the United States, the world's biggest energy consumer, dealers said.

At 0550 GMT, New York's main oil futures contract, light sweet crude for delivery in April, was up 14 cents to $37.25 dollars a barrel from $37.11 dollars in late US trades Friday.

Brent North Sea crude for May rose up 38 cents to 40.68 dollars.

"We have just seen some fairly big falls last week because of worries over the US economic slow so still fears about the market but gasoline rebounded and this kept the market strong," said Tony Nunan, energy risk manager for Mitsubishi Corp. in Tokyo. "Gasoline rallied on Friday after Thursday's profit-taking...the momentum is carrying on from Friday."

Fears of supply disruption in a close, participant are increasingly concerned about gasoline supplies ahead of the US peak driving season in May. Over the past few weeks, US gasoline inventories have been on the decline.

Nunan said oil prices would be heading higher on the land.

Oil rated last week after the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec) maintained its daily output target at 25.8 million barrels at its ministerial meeting in Vienna, arguing that global supply levels are healthy.

"That outcome was widely anticipated...If anything it's a little bearish for the market because Opec has not fully implemented the full (previous) output cuts," Nunan said. "The one thing that is casting doubt is the cold weather in the US, and that gasoline demand is strong."

The US cutting cutted cut production at its two previous meetings in October and December in its monthly report, Opec said world oil demand would grow by 1.3 percent in 2003, matching its forecast in January and February.

Opec's only surprise was its announcement to meet in September, skipping its expected June meeting, analysts said. The next said in next meeting would be an ordinary session in Vienna on Sept. 11.

The move suggested "they see is no hurry to raise output again," said Tim Evans, a Citigroup analyst. AFP

Asian shares up; China interest rate hike ignored

SINGAPORE—ASIAN SHARES YESTERday rose, shrugging off a Chinese interest rate hike, as a weaker yen encouraged Japanese investors picked up shares in technology firms beaten down during the global sell-off of recent weeks.

The dollar rose more than a yen from the day's low, as gains in the share markets helped cut the yen's safe-haven appeal in financial markets was prompting investors to cash out of riskier assets and pay off the cheap yen loans that had financed them.

China's weekend interest rate rise hadn't knocked copper prices down or caused half a percent or so stocks of economic demand.

Nerves jangled when China's main share index opened down more than 2 percent—fuelling worries a slide in Chinese stocks could hit other regional markets—but it quickly regained to price in pre-strong gains.

"The interest rate hike had been factored in already—the only surprise was timing," said Ernie Tiu, strategist at CIBA Securities in Hong Kong. "The market is basically buying on fact."

Shares prices have fallen in a global sell-off in recent weeks, triggered by a plunge in Chinese stocks in late February and fears of slowing growth in the United States.

Gold rose to its highest in more than a week on speculative buying.

Tokyo's Nikkei rose 1.6 percent to close above 17,000 for the first time since March 13, with chip gear maker Advantest Corp. up 2.9 percent and electronics components maker Kyocera Corp. rising 1.2 percent.

MSCI's broadest index of Asia Pacific shares outside Japan was up 0.8 percent by 08:10 GMT.

Australia's S&P ASX 200 rose 0.6 percent, as Bank of Queensland's $1.95 billion bid for rival Bendigo Bank raised hopes for more deals in the sector and boosted financial stocks.

Share markets in Hong Kong and Shanghai also jogged off China's 0.27 percentage point interest rate rise—the third hike in less than a year. The Shanghai Composite Index rose 2.5 percent to near a record high and the Hang Seng rose 1 percent.

"The interest rate hike won't have much impact on the stock market—it's not a cooling measure directed against stocks," said Zhang Yanling, analyst at Shenlong Securities in Shanghai.

Stocks investors in South Korea and Singapore rose more than 1 percent. Taiwan's benchmark finished up 0.2 percent.

The dollar bought around 117.38 yen at 08:10 GMT, having risen as high as 117.45, well above the day's low of 116.25 yen. The euro traded around 108.05 yen.

Gains for the yen in recent weeks had been fuelled by a flight from risk that saw investors unwind so-called carry trades, which are low-yielding currencies like the yen as a cheap source of funds to buy higher-yielding assets.

"It's the speculators who are making the market very volatile," said a trader at Japanese bank. "They had no more reasons to buy yen beyond the morning high, and then flipped positions back to sell yen to make money in a thin market."

Gold traded around $355.18 an ounce, after rising as high as $355.70. The precious metal had hit a six-week low of $352.30 on March 6, when tumbling stock prices and a rising yen had forced risk-averse investors to sell gold to cover losses.

The benchmark 10-year Japanese government bond yield was unchanged at 1.370 percent. Reuters

Chinese firm says pricey nickel may cause crash

SHANGHAI—CHINA'S TOP NICKEL producer Jinchuan Group Ltd. warned that rare supply could create a crash in nickel prices in the near few years as "crazy" current prices encourage blind investment in nickel mines.

International nickel prices notched $18,308 a ton on Friday their fifth-record high in as many days.

"Such crazy gains in nickel prices have spurred irrational investments in the nickel industry," Jinchuan said in a statement.

"The speedy development in nickel miners will lead to a rapid rise in supply when the projects begin commercial production in the near few years." Reuters

BUSINESS

Clark airport starts P150-M expansion

By Rizz T. Olchondra

THE P1.5-BILLION EXPANSION OF THE Diosdado Macapagal International Airport, also known as Clark International Airport, is due to begin this summer.

To ensure the project's smooth implementation, Clark International Airport Corp. is seeking an exemption from the ban on government-contracted construction imposed by the Commission on Elections during the election period.

CIAC president and CEO Victor Jose Lacanilao said in a recent agency the Bases Conversion Development Authority had written Comelec regarding the application for the project's exemption from the ban.

Of the total budget, P60 million will be used to improve the check-in, pre-departure and passenger processing areas of the passenger terminal 1. The remaining P82.5 million will be used to upgrade X-ray machines, information systems and other airport equipment.

The election period covers 45 days before and 45 days after the elections on May 14, 2007. This means the ban will end on June 28.

In the meantime, the civil works component of the project is again being anchored off. The first bidding was declared a failure since the winner in the first bidding failed on Jan. 27 was not able to meet certain requirements of CIAC.

Lacanilao said at least six groups had expressed interest to participate in the bidding.

The agency intends to start construction next month for completion in late October or early November.

The terminal expansion would enable the DMIA to accommodate two million passengers from its current capacity of one million passengers, Lacanilao said.

As of 2006, the total passenger arrivals at DMIA reached 460,000 from 2001 to 2002. About 975,867 were international guests last year, 2.5 percent from 2,241,497 in 2005), while 27,389 were domestic passengers (up 549 percent from 7,018 in 2005).

Lacanilao attributed the increase to the entry of low-cost carriers in Clark.

Forum Energy starts repair of well in Cebu

By Abigail L. Ho

MALTESE-CANADIAN JOINT VENTURE Forum Energy Plc has started the "workover" of the Pre-em-2X well in Barangay Mars, Cebu, following the refurbishment of the company's Hoisting Drilling Rig.

A workover refers to the stimulation or repair of recovering production-well to restore, prolong or enhance its output, to produce hydrocarbons.

In a statement posted on the company's official website, Forum said the well was first drilled in 2005 to a total depth of 1,732 feet.

"The well encountered multiple hydrocarbon bearing zones, including a 54-foot net oil-bearing zone from the gross interval of 1,379-1,645 feet, at flow rate of 137,000 standard cubic feet of gas per day was achieved at that time," the company said.

In the area of oil and gas exploration this year, the Department of Energy said it was expecting some $216 million in new commitments for petroleum service companies, including Forum.

The interest and energy secretary Raphael Lotilla, would forward for the drilling of at least six exploration wells in Bohanes, Cebu; Pagua Gulf in Quezon; Mindoro and the East Visayas basin.

"A number of drillings will also [will be taking] place within the year for the extraction of already proven reserves that were capped in the '70s and '80s when they were not yet commercially viable but which have become commercially viable now," he said.

Service Contract 40 operator Forum Energy Philippines Corp., the local arm of the British-Canadian joint venture, will be conducting one well testing, worth around $175,000, within its North Cebu contract area, after conducting its first well testing in 2005.

The Netherlands' Pitoil Oil, operator of SC 40, will invest $3 million to $5 million exploration well within the first quarter of the year.

However, June and July, Malampaya Petroleum Limited Overseas Ltd's third well also drill an exploration well in offshore Mindoro. The project is worth at least $22 million.

IN THIS ISSUE
Prepare for sizzling days ahead /C2

LIFESTYLE
Editor: Cheche Banal-Formoso

DESIGNER WHEY

MONDAY ESS • WEDNESDAY 2BU • THURSDAY FOOD • FRIDAY FASHION & BEAUTY

Firm but gentle: Young skin sans surgery

SPLIT-FACE comparison after a single ReFirme session shows untreated left cheek and treated right cheek.

IT PAYS to start early not to be right, noninvasive facial procedure.

Dermatologist did a series of local clinical trials for ReFirme before making it available here

By Alex T. Vergara

BEAUTY JUNKIES MAY HAVE a new ally in their endless and sometimes futile search for anything that can delay aging.

After almost a year of clinical trials involving Filipino subjects, Belo Cosmetic Center in Makati has introduced ReFirme.

"ReFirme has been approved by the FDA (Food and Drug Administration) in the United States," says Dr. Maria Isabelita Joya, an dermatologist at Belo Cosmetic Center. "[But] I still did a series of clinical trials here to see the results for myself. I'm quite satisfied."

The procedure combines radio frequency and infrared to stimulate collagen production deep under the skin to tighten sagging facial and neck muscles, as well as reduce the appearance of fine lines.

Like Thermage and Titan, ReFirme is a noninvasive and nonablative (does not involve the removal of tissue) form of facelift. It does not wound or injure the topmost layer of the skin.

Combination

ReFirme combines the face-lifting properties of both Thermage (radio frequency) and Titan (infrared).

But, unlike procedures that often require anesthesia of the client, unless she has a high tolerance for pain, ReFirme is virtually painless.

Joya does not even need to apply topical anaesthesia on a patient's face before performing the procedure. It all boils down to the type of "frequency" used.

"Radio frequencies produced by Thermage are monopolar," says Joya, "while those produced by ReFirme are bipolar."

Monopolar frequencies are stronger and therefore more painful. Joya adds that research has shown that Thermage has an unwanted side effect.

"It can face tension tighten, but it is likely to look elevators because you need to lose fat in a nonspecific process," she explains. "The effect may be less dramatic when you undergo a bipolar procedure like ReFirme, but you're assured that it won't reach a point where you'd have fits."

ReFirme's infrared and radio frequencies penetrate and heat in on the skin's deeper levels to induce cells responsible for producing collagen and elastin. Infrared, in particular, is known to enhance collagen synthesis, says Joya.

Collagen and elastin are the building blocks of healthy skin and tissue beneath our skin. Unfortunately, as one ages, the body produces the two protein hydrolysate at a much slower rate.

The initial effect is not as dramatic as a facelift, but the person will see a noticeable tightening immediately after undergoing the 30- to 40-minute "facelift break" procedure.

Instant gratification

The beauty center does not even need to prepare the skin by using all sorts of herbal creams and lotions days before the procedure. Most importantly, ReFirme offers instant gratification.

"They don't have to wait until the fourth

(turn C)

BEFORE AFTER

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LEON and designer-restaurateur Antonio with Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, Rep. Teddyboy Locsin, and Feng Shui master Joseph Chan

HOST Hennessy's Olga Azancot, raffle winner Rudolf Gheraga, Mandarin Oriental Manila's popular general manager Helmut Quinsberger and runners Cici Dalisay and David Cimbra

CFO/BANK Cargo's current treasury manager for global investment group Mark James and wife Joanne

DONE and Ayesha's Sarkar of the Embassy of Romania

JOURNALIST Julie Yap Daza, Makati First Lady Dr. Elenita Binay with Tina Cotajeta, UP College of Fine Arts dean and wife of Mandaluyong Mayor Inc. dean

Pink is the color of life

MERCEDES-BENZ marketing manager Apple Ting (left) and CATS Marian Andrea Villarosa with Singapore Airlines' cousin Rita Ong and Joanne Fonseca

PINK FOR LIFE COMMITTEE MEMBERS Standing (from Tuason, Ilgaki Ziprasit, Joy Wanasen, and Maria Aurigbuis; Seated: Dr. Diana Cua-Salcedo, Irene Marcos-Araneta, and Vicky Belo

MERCEDES-BENZ WOMEN Lucky Cuizon, Lia Jimenez, Ella V. and Nancy Tan

MINI 3-Door for Lawmen Divas Collegian Livy and Miss Malaysia Eunice

MINI Moreno with Sheryl Bermejo and Tina David

MOMMARY Monica Lorrel Perreras-Ledesma and Francis Agustinin Jacinto visit to their school manager and make-over during the Mercedes-Benz Women's Day

EPIT Acuña with Sheila Cuaño and CATS Misses Grace Ang

All is not fabulous and fun Thursday's first super night fundraising event for breast cancer treatment, unless.

The event is a project of that ultra chic magazine, Philippine Tatler, and its fantastic partners, Mabuti Group-La Bodgini, Pikmati, Belo Medical Group, Bigalli's Kitchen and the International Breast Foundation.

Aptly called "Pink for Life," cocktails will be held at the Regal Ballroom of the Makati Shangri-La tonight.

"The aim of the fundraiser is to provide much needed chemotherapy treatment for those patients with Stage 1 and 2 breast cancer. The beneficiary of the Pink for Life event is Breast Buddies Inc., a nonprofit organization registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Structured chemotherapy medication will be made available through the coordination and supervision of Dr. Diana Cua-Salcedo, founder of Breast Buddies Inc.," explained Hortencia Tiaco's friend Marvel Tuanchana, Tatler's mega publisher.

The goal is to raise some P5 million from corporate and individual donors who can, God-willing, be the "Pink for Life" events will be aided a minimum donation of P1,000. Masterchefs, many gourmet dishes, and, of course, definitely be most welcome, pahangge.

It will absolutely be an evening of fun and glamour. Great musical entertainment will be provided by DJ Mo, Ebay Fugoso and Gonzo Pajaro. Prizes circle of a unique fashion sweeping, of course, to this other feature floor.

Please, please participate in this very worthy endeavor! Reservations can be made at the Philippine Tatler office, tel. 6130052 or 8364971. Look for Marie Jean if you want your donation collected. You can also give on the day itself at the ballroom foyer.

The "Pink for Life" is expected to help over 200 women and their loved ones. Surely, that is reason enough to celebrate, pahangge.

Annual tradition

As always, when Chinese New Year arrives, there is only one place to be—the elegant Mandarin Oriental, Manila, dahhhgg. The hotel's grand feast welcomes of the Year of the Dragon under the direction of international gourmet Joseph Chan.

Now on its 11th year, the event has undoubtedly become a tradition for Crown Metalle's cordial air, diplomatic pack and hostesses from the Filipino-Chinese community. It is considered by many as the biggest Chinese New Year celebration outside of Binondo, pahangge.

The fun started with the piggy bank magic show ritual. Everyone received his/her fine lucky coin by the pros from Master Chan. Makati's dynamic mayor Jejomar Binay and Mandarin Oriental's general manager, super popular Helmut Sonnberger hosted the property parade on opening Saturday.

Rico soon followed by tuboo from Ping Ping's Lechon and the Ling Kam minute dance, other's fun dancers. A convoy of cars and motorbike models of BMW cars out to TV5's through the room mapped out by Master Chan, dahhhgg.

The prominent personalities who participated in the parade and the cool eye-dishing contenders included Philippine Airlines' Oriental Manila's chief lady Miss Goldberger; Saudi Arabian Ambassador Mohammad Ameen Fadel; philanthropist Rosemarie Arsua; Metrobank's Amy Aala Pedro; hottest country representative other cougar Olga Ramirez; and Prestige Cars BMW's marketing head. Mr. Hennessy.

A night market at the hotel's lot pick kaze in-front hour trying to get good bargains.

The grand welcome was held in celebration with, among others, Chinese Ambassador Minhrong Zhang, Malaysian Ambassador Rosemarie Arsua, Metrobank's Amy Aala Pedro, hottest country representative other cougar Olga Ramirez, and Prestige Cars BMW's marketing head. Mr. Hennessy.

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WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH
Maurice Arreche
Photo by Alex Von Rieger
using Kodak Easy Share

Diversity

During our country's first ever "Women's Day," superbly hosted by Mercedes-Benz, fans her personalities were showcased for their choice of "cars and preference in women."

The special day, pahangge, showed in the diversity of women. Mercedes-Benz fan number one, manager Apple Ting and fun-loving Philippines' country operations manager Paolo Abaid did a joint presentation on what women liked in terms of cars and women.

Among the fashionably dressed women present were Gibi Ermita, Mai-Ai Montemar, Lori Chuan, Marie Claire's Myrna Sison, Artist Magalini's Gina Bautis, Carlo Sibal , Jazz Yap of Lifestyle Asia, prominent Lucille Carlos Lorenzo, Bing Calderon Buck, and Helen Ong.

Four of CATS Misses Mercedes-Benz models, paired with four personality types, had the women writing and signing: R-Class for the "practical woman," S-Class for the "executive career woman," CLS-Class for the "trendy individuals," and M-Class for the "adventurous woman."

It is no wonder so many of our modern women are driving such Benz cars, dahhhgg.

Shangri-La Mall of Asia thrilled the women with four exciting cuts from Belgian Orson Antoine for the "career woman." Of the Bentley for the "adventurous woman," four cars for queen Evonne Charma for the "practical woman," and Burberry London for the fashionista."

The women were later treated to Gourmet Roads' fresh salad bar and Gaviola's yummy cuisine. They danced back to work with goodies from Mercedes-Benz, that roasted fluffy teddy bear and Gourmet Roads, cool it!

Spicy

If you dig Indian cuisine like I do, well pahangge, drop by Mahut Shangri-La delight-ful Garden Royal Café on or before March 31 for another dinner.

The land of Indian food will be down by grand chef Virender Rawat. He prepares a sophisticated spread of Indian flavor. Through a combination of spices and imported ingredients, dahhhgg.

It includes a selection of Tandoori chicken baked in a clay pot to lock in the rich flavors, barbecued herbed lamb chops, yummy lamb casserole, and a chicken sandwich layered with vegetables. Chased the chicken and veggies with out the bread plus loads of other exotic dishes, pahangge.

For reservations, call 6810000 or 9110000 ext. 7266/7599.

"practical woman," S-Class for the "executive career woman," CLS-Class for the "trendy individuals," and M-Class for the "adventurous woman."

It is no wonder so many of our modern women are driving such Benz cars, dahhhgg.

Shangri-La Mall of Asia thrilled the women with four exciting cuts from Belgian Orson Antoine for the "career woman." Of the Bentley for the "adventurous woman," four cars for queen Evonne Charma for the "practical woman," and Burberry London for the fashionista."

The women were later treated to Gourmet Roads' fresh salad bar and Gaviola's yummy cuisine. They danced back to work with goodies from Mercedes-Benz, that roasted fluffy teddy bear and Gourmet Roads, cool it!

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INSIDE OUT
Cory Quirino

Beat the summer heat

SUMMER IS UPON US, AND ITS intensity has never been felt more strongly than now. With the draining of the last fit comes heat, most protective against the weather says is needed.

Too hot for comfort

With temperatures rising, most health consultants, especially involving the skin, may be expected and considered a fundamental. When is it too hot for comfort, what measures should you take?

Avoid at all cost

- Sunbathing, swimming at high noon. The sun is at its highest point at this time. Rich intensity rays are at their most damaging.
- Strenuous and crash diets just to get into your swimsuits. These can fuse your health, fast slowly, steadily.
- Alcoholic beverages when the heat is at its worst. Drinking will make your inner temperature rise as well. Your blood pressure may also be at risk.
- Being under the sun without protection. For a sunblock with SPF (Sun Protection Factor) of at least 30.

Limiting directly at the sun with your Dolce eyes. Wear sunglasses with a UV (ultra violet) shield.

- Squinting when the sun is glaring. This causes wrinkles.
- Exposing children (infants to 4 years old) directly under the sun 11 a.m.-4 p.m. They are too tender to defend themselves against the sun's harmful rays.

Do at all times

- Drink a glass of clear, purified water every hour even if you are not thirsty.
- Have in your possession a hat, umbrella, sunglasses, tan. You never know when you need them.
- Moisturize your face twice a day to prevent dryness.
- Reapply sunblock every 2-3 hours if you are swimming, make sure you reapply religiously as it seems off fast in our warm-protected sunblock. This way you can enjoy outdoor activities without burning your skin or application of sunblock.
- Eat light meals frequently to keep your blood sugar levels stable. Three to five should be happy about this. The best diet plan is to eat small portions frequently.
- Munch on high-water fruits and vegetables like watermelons, melons, mangos, (mango conglomerate). That might refreshen you regularly.
- Wear light-colored clothes—white and pastel. White deflects the sunlight so it does not absorb heat as fast as dark colors do.
- Ladies, use shirts at office as you can. Keeping your intimate parts free from constriction caused by tight jeans, etc.) can ensure comfort and hygiene, preventing harmful fungal infections. The heat at this time can affect your body.
- If you feel the onset of an infection, see your physician. Chances are you will be asked to stop using feminine wash (especially perfumed ones) and douche. good for your intimate apparel, etc.
- Wear loose, comfortable clothing. Going braless is not only good for wearing your body but also ensuring unrestricted blood circulation in the breast area.
- Embark on a light exercise regimen. If you have more time to your hands, you have no excuse not to engage in some form of activity.
- Take your multi-vitamin/mineral supplement daily. Vitamin supplements that are loaded to the skin are A and C. Add an extra dosage for a healthy complexion.
- Pamper yourself whenever possible. Summer days have often made more a ripped to slow-down.
- Recharging should take priority over. This means less work, more recreation.
- Search for ways to stay in touch with your inner self, the fountainhead of your authenticity self.

Summer revive soak

In a tub of iced water, throw in some ice cubes and cut one cup of a citrus concoction—calamansi, lemon, orange, etc. This will revive your senses and refurbish your skin.

You can have this under the sunscreen can for sensitive caution.

Moonlight walk

If you walk in the moonlight, you are heading in the sun in a roundabout way. Why? Because the moon reflects the sun. Make the moon your friend. Walk, meditate and be one with the silence of the night. This way you can become with your own silence.

Love and light

INNER AWARENESS
Jaime Licauco

'The Secret' that is no secret

HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT the phenomenal book "The Secret" by Rhonda Byrne and its accompanying DVD?

According to Amazon's Army teller, it "could be the fastest-selling book of its kind in the history of publishing with 1.75 million copies projected to be in print by March 2, just over three months since it came out, plus 1.5 million DVDs sold."

Several friends passed on to me copies of the DVD a few weeks ago. Only recently did I receive the book from Annie Rebecca, a young businesswoman and graduate of my courses. I didn't know the book was already in local bookstores.

Intriguing

My curiosity was aroused because of the very enticing and intriguing promo write-up on the jacket of the DVD:

"The Secret," it says, "has existed through out the history of humankind. It has been discovered, censored, suppressed, hidden, lost and rediscovered. It has been hunted down, stolen and bought for vast sums of money. Now, for the first time in history, 'The Secret' is being revealed to the world.

"A number of exceptional men and women discovered 'The Secret,' and over the became known as the greatest people who ever lived. Among them: Plato, Leonardo, Galileo, Sagredo, Hugo, Beethoven, Lincoln, Edison, Einstein and Carnegie, to name a few.

"'The Secret' reveals how to apply this powerful knowledge in your life in every area from health to wealth, to success to relationships. 'The Secret' to everything you have dreamed of and is beyond your wildest dreams."

Irresistible

Wow! With that kind of a buildup, who wouldn't want to grab the DVD or book? It seems too good to resist!

As Hawaiian pointed out, 'The Secret' "uses a combination of marketing genius." Adds Fernando Barnes, a buyer who specializes in metaphysical for Borders Books: "We all want to be in on a secret. But to present it as the secret, that was brilliant."

Who is Byrne? "A divorced mother who had hit a rocky patch in her business and personal life. In that moment of despair when she wept and wept (as she recounted to Oprah on the first of two broadcasts devoted to her work), she discovered a long-neglected book during hers. HERE called 'The Science of Getting Rich.' In it she found how to let your thoughts and feelings get you everything you want and found determined to share it with the world. She called it 'The Secret.'"

And what is 'The Secret' all about? It is the Law of Attraction that holds that you create your own reality through your thoughts.

Age-old principle

So what's the big secret about that? Actually nothing. This law or principle has been known for thousands of years. Buddha taught that the world as we know it is nothing more than our own mental creation. To say "Your mind" sermons, which I have been conducting regularly for the last 20 years, I mention the law of attraction as one of the four hidden laws of nature that says "like attracts like."

If you think positive thoughts, positive things happen to you. If negative, then negative things happen.

There is, therefore, nothing new about "The Secret." In fairness to Byrne, she never claimed that what she discovered was new. What is new is the way she presented and marketed the book and the film. After arousing the curiosity of the Australian and American public, it is now sweeping the middle and upper class segments of Philippine society.

> If you visualize strongly enough what you really want it will appear sooner or later

The idea that if you visualize strongly enough something you really want, say, a parking lot or camera, that object will physically appear before you sooner or later, is still not accepted by mainstream scientists.

"That's preposterous, on a scientific level," according to them. But a few quantum physicists claim to have experimental evidence that "thoughts can influence physical objects."

Dr. Robert Jahn, an engineer and psychologist Brenda Dunne of Princeton University have been conducting ridiculously experiments under scientifically controlled conditions to show the influence of thoughts on the fall of a random dice (See their book "Margins of Reality").

Untapped powers

Although the law of attraction is really no secret at all, I would give credit to Byrne for calling attention to one of the hidden laws of nature and to the largely untapped powers of the human mind, which she writes has been reaching and expanding for the last two decades.

By the way, the other three related hidden laws of nature cited in 'The Secret' are: The Law of Affirmation (what you affirm becomes a reality), the Law of Compensation (whatever you do comes back to you, otherwise known as the law of karma), and the Law of Causality (everything has a reason; nothing happens by accident).

If you want to learn how to apply these hidden laws of nature in your life, attend my next seminar on "Inner Mind Development," "Basic ESP and Intuition Development," and "Soulmates, Karma and Reincarnation." Call Inner Mind Development Institute at 8337243, 8926888 or 0906.3561700. There's one scheduled in Davao, March 24-25. Call 0917.8323649 or 0927.7128233.

Firm but gentle: Young skin sans surgery

Foreground C1

or lift's treatment to no results," says Joya. "The effect is immediate and gets better with every treatment."

A typical package consists of five treatments spaced within one to three weeks. The client is asked to return every so often for follow-up treatments.

Refirme, however, does not address such concerns as deep acne scars, pronounced lines and enlarged pores. For these problems, one has to undergo a more aggressive treatments such as Pixaid (which Facial Care also offers).

Joya says it pays to undergo Refirme even before a person hits 40. But it is also never too late to benefit from it. Joya says

TWO months after treatment, the left side of this man's face is less baggy than the untreated right side.

larly suitable to, and serious improvement to the faces of, clients in their 60s and 70s.

"If you do the Refirme in your 30s, you won't have to subject yourself to painful Botox injections in your 40s," Joya said.

Refirme, says Joya, can address a host of problems that Botox cannot. The latter merely relaxes the muscles to make skin appear tighter, while the former directly addresses the effects of gravity on facial muscles that come with age.

E-mail the author at energen@inquirer.com.ph

Best exercises for strong bones

Letter-V opposite arm and leg

THE EXERCISE: Lie on the floor, knees bent and your thighs and your arms straight.

Equipment:
Exercise mat and dumbbell (Ankle weights are optional.)

Exercise technique:
1. Lie on your back with your right leg and left arm straight above you.
2. Simultaneously lower arm and leg halfway between the starting position and the floor.
3. Bring your arm and leg back to together.
4. Do the desired number of repetitions, then do the other side with your left leg and right arm.

Self-resistance tips
1. Maintain control of your arm and leg muscles throughout the exercise.
2. Avoid jerking or using momentum to raise or lower the weights.
3. Maintain a slight tightness in the abdominal area to stabilize your hips.
4. Inhale as you lower arm and leg; exhale on the return.

Rapid Bone
Do 10-15 repetitions on each side.

By Tina

EXERCISE PLAYS AN important role in building bone in childhood and adolescence, maintaining bone before 50, and slowing down bone loss after 50. But exercises are not equal.

The best exercises are those with impact (running, sprinting, jumping) or resistance (squats, push-ups, rock climbing).

Current research indicates that non-weight bearing exercise like cycling and swimming and light impact exercise like slow walking are not enough.

Yoga and Pilates

There are not many yoga or Pilates bone density studies. However, knowing that resistance exercise is beneficial, we can logically assume that some aspects of yoga and Pilates are beneficial.

Standing yoga poses, like the warrior and triangle poses, can build leg and hip bones. Long-legged pose, like tree, improves balance. Poses like reverse plank and upward and downward dog should strengthen arms and hands.

All yoga and Pilates exercises that require lifting of the legs or upper torso to the supine or prone (face up and face down) positions may build bone density in the lumbar spine.

Pilates machines that use the resistance of springs are similar to gym machines using cables.

Tai Chi

This gentle exercise improves balance and leg strength. Studies found that people who did tai chi reduced their rate of falling by 50 percent. When they do fall, their rate of fractures is much less. Do tai chi once or twice a week for at least 15 minutes.

Jumping

Skipping rope, jumping jacks and vertical jumps are effective bone builders. Skip rope for at least 15 minutes 3-5 times a week. You only need ten minutes a day for jumping jacks and vertical jumps. Do several 10-20 second jumps and rest in between.

Racquet sports

A Finnish study found that middle-aged men who played tennis had the highest bone mineral densities. Squash, tennis and badminton are stop-and-go sports with rapid multidirectional changes—all beneficial to bone strengthening.

Gardening

Growing flowers can help build bone but only if you actually bend, raise and weed. Telling your gardener what to do doesn't count. A University of Arkansas study found that women older than 50 who went to the gym or who gardened had lower rates of osteoporosis.

Rowing

In an Oregon University study, postmenopausal women who rowed competitively for one year experienced a 4-percent gain/increase in spine density than women who did not row but who were physically active.

> For people at risk of falling, lifting weights is a better and safer alternative than walking

Aerobic dance

Women who did a 45-minute step aerobics class three times a week for six months experienced a 3-percent increase in bone density in their spines, legs and hips.

Researchers at Texas A&M University say step aerobics adds the extra challenge of changes to direction and speed that stimulate the bones even better than skipping rope and jogging that only offer impact.

A British study found that high-impact aerobics (aerobics with jumps, skips, and jumps) improved the tiptoe density at postmenopausal women and men over 50.

Walking

A Johns Hopkins Hospital study found that light intensity walking does not strengthen bones. Brisk walking delivers a higher impact than slow walking.

Brisk walking (as if you are late for an appointment) for 30 minutes four days a week can help reduce bone loss before and after menopause. A study found that women who regularly walked 7.5 miles a week lost bone at a slower rate (but even so, as years longer) than women who did not walk.

For people at risk of falling, lifting weights is a better and safer alternative than walking.

Cycling

Off-road bikers have above average bone density while street cyclists have slightly below average bone density, according to a study published in the journal Bone. The jarring, bouncing and vibration on rough roads is a stimulation that builds bone.

If street cycling or spinning is your only exercise, add weight training or impact exercise to your regimen. A 2003 study found that male cyclists (aged 40-60) who had been cycling 12.5 hours a week for 20 years had bones that were 10 percent less dense than active non-cycling men their age. Of the 27 cyclists, 17 had osteopenic bone loss or osteoporosis while four had severe bone loss or osteoporosis.

Perhaps swinging from normal cycling may contribute to bone loss. Evidence suggests an loss of intense endurance training can result in a loss of 200 mg of calcium. A 1996 study attributed bone thinning among college basketball players to prolific sweating.

Swimming

Many studies found that swimmers had lower bone densities that athletes in weight-bearing sports and losers or similar bone densities as non-athletes. The results apply to males and females—cryophony age, adolescence and adults. Swimming is not reported to increase bone mineral density.

But most studies used dual X-ray absorptiometry (DXA), a two-dimensional measure highly influenced by body size.

Male water polo players and weightlifters assessed using quantitative computed tomography (QCT) had similar bone densities.

But studies found that swimming improved bone elasticity and structural strength—properties that could only be seen with quantitative ultrasound (QUS).

Perhaps when more human studies use QUS, swimming will shake off its bad reputation. In the meantime, swimmers should cross-train with weights or impact exercise.

Sources: National Osteoporosis Foundation, American College of Sports Medicine, American Council on Exercise, Harvard School of Public Health

More: The Scientific Sports & Fitness Council will hold a Functional Training seminar March 24. Topics will include core functional exercise and core exercises. Call 4340493 local 303.

Visit www.nationalfitness.info

Your Doctor Knows Best

Ismael I. Glass, MD, FPCP, FPSG, FPSDE

Question:
I have been having chest discomfort. How would I know if this is GERD?

Doctor says...

The best way to know the cause of your chest discomfort is to consult a doctor. Chest discomfort may be secondary to many things. The most problematic among these conditions causing chest discomfort—is the possibility of a heart disease. This is of primary concern because the presence of a cardiac condition can lead to sudden death, while the other causes (such as GERD or gastroesophageal reflux disease) do not kill patients suddenly. Once the doctor is certain that the cause of the chest discomfort is not a cardiac problem, the consideration will then be GERD.

GERD is characterized by the backflow of stomach contents, usually acid, from the stomach to the esophagus. This happens when the muscle at the lower part of your esophagus called the lower esophageal sphincter, which prevents the reflux of stomach contents back to the esophagus, relaxes. You may also have problems in the clearance of acid in the esophagus or delay in the emptying of your stomach contents.

The symptoms of GERD can be divided into gastrointestinal (GI) and extra-GI manifestations. GI symptoms include heartburn or burning sensation in the chest, regurgitation or acid taste in the mouth, pain in the upper part of the stomach and chest pain. On the other hand, extra-GI manifestations include sore throat or hoarseness, cough, asthma, inflammation of the larynx (laryngitis) and dental erosion. Because of these symptoms, GERD affects quality of life, work productivity and daily activities.

GERD is a spectrum of diseases, ranging from those without esophageal injury to those with complications such as inflammation of the esophagus (esophagitis), narrowing of the esophagus (stricture), bleeding, Barrett's esophagus (a pre-cancerous condition) and adenocarcinoma (a type of cancer). The longer the acid exposure of the esophagus, the higher the possibility of complications.

To determine the severity of the disease, your doctor may offer diagnostic tests (such as endoscopy) or therapeutic trial, which may be medications or advice on lifestyle modification.

The symptoms and complications of GERD can severely impact your quality of life. It is best to consult your doctor if you are experiencing these discomfort or any of the symptoms.

Dr. Glass is a gastroenterologist. He is a consultant at the Philippine General Hospital and holds clinics at The Medical City and Manila Doctors Hospital. He is also a professor in the University of the Philippines College of Medicine.

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How can a woman prevent Cervical Cancer?

About two-thirds of all cervical cancers are caused by Human Papillomavirus (HPV) types 16 and 18 which are sexually transmitted. Cervical pre-cancerous and early cancers usually show no signs or symptoms. Symptoms develop when cancer has become invasive. The most common symptom is abnormal vaginal bleeding. Signs and symptoms include abnormal discharge from vagina like blood spots or light bleeding between menses, prolonged or profuse menstrual bleeding, bleeding following intercourse, and pelvic pain.

Take Charge Doc!

Nicky

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No special girl for Dennis T

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carrasco

DENNIS TRILLO IS ECSTATIC ABOUT HIS self-titled debut album (Softmusic, Universal Records). It contains 12 tracks, including a duet with Regine Velasquez (album producer along with Ogie Alcasid) "Magsisinggaling Ma[l]," Gigi's composition "Sex So Ice," the hit Happily Ever After" and Eric Gincarne's "Love in All Our Glances."

After proving his worth as an actor, Dennis is now keen on becoming a crooner artist. "It's harder to sing live than to act 'cause walang take two," says Dennis. "But singing is like acting. As an actor I get into character for the role or scene in life. When I sing, I have to really feel the lyrics."

In her one to four from Miley and Pinka Pacquiao who are also reprising title-character singers! "They have their own style. I have mine. There's room for everybody."

Any special girl he had in mind while recording the album? "To whom it may concern lang (laughs)!"

For sure, legions of girls out there would gladly volunteer.

Framed up!

MY heart goes out to Hilde Muñoz, who was arrested for possession of 1.5 grams of shabu in a Lilo raid. He has posted bail. I texted him but got no reply.

According to a mutual friend, Gene must have been framed up. I don't discount the possibility of a political angle in light of the election heat. Until a staunch FPJ supporter, Pilit Sa Dalisay frontrunner, I see no reason for him to resort to drugs.

The last time we spoke, he was in high spirits, telling me about how he met his love child after 15 long years. I always trust Chito about his womanizing, but all bets are void. Anyway, Chito, he would choose the lesser evil.

Soup the shaun!

THE KNIGHT of Asia Agassi's sexy video, "Bedtime," with The Men of Wowowee got really steamy. The team of "Philippine Idol" finalists into Shein, owner of the hours in Marikina where they were filming, snapped the shots. She demanded results to the location manager, who was not around. The cast and crew had to change venues pronto! Hmmm . . . Ami's "Bedtime"? VCD is bound to keep you up all night.

New 'Fantasticnes'

MARC Herras is all agog preparing for his role as "Fantasticnes." Will his theatrical romance with Rizza Cayaon be relatively on the set?

He grins, "Anything can happen. Abangan!" Who's he fed unbossed donning the super hero's costume? Its body-hugging fit could reveal if he's "fantastically endowed" or not. Its blushes, "I'll get used to it. I hope they enjoy the view (laughs)!"

It remains to be seen if Marc will make his mark in that aspect, among other things, as he rejoins Mr. Instik's role.

More peaceful

DOMINIC ping to Jennylyn Mercado's love life told me that her relationship with Patrick Garcia is more powerful than her previous romance with Mark Herras. "When Mark and Ara would fight, was talaga. Baraka silang high-strung. Patrick is more calm/reposed in the decision-making process. It must be the age factor" Sometimes age does matter if we want love to sage gracefully from then.

Happy pair

Shaina Magdayao and Rayver Cruz are the certified new Guy and Pip after the success of their movie, Segal Jones. (connect's "Happy Hearts." Rayver happens to be the neighbor of Pip, who plays Shaina's dad in the film. Pips appearers of the month. "I get teased nga, inviting Rayver and Shaina on set. Parang kami ni Guy Inches."

History and (last) hysteria repeats itself! Looks like the "Sharon" magic will not make a comeback yet.

E-mail annoyingbuboksurgeit@yahoo.com.

PHOTO left, Michael V, Pauleen Bautista, Gian Bernardo and Carmi Martin in the episode, "Ang Kapatid Kong si Eric."

'Paraiso' interrupted

Gawad Kalinga movie screened in US; local preem delayed

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

INITIALLY SCHEDULED THIS month, the local premiere of the Gawad Kalinga movie, "Paraiso: Isinlang Kawanan ng Ating Ama," has been moved to June—primarily because one of its lead stars, Cesar Montano, had decided to run for the Senate.

This was confirmed by Bibby Barrazo, the telegrip executive producer. The film's other executive producers are Mads Mendillano and Antonio Meloy, founder of the much-awarded nongovernmental organization Gawad Kalinga.

Barrazo explained: "We had a choice to debut in March or in June. If we opened this month, we'd have an impact on the coming elections and [maybe] some funds for the typhoon victims in Bicol or nearby as possible. A June play date, however, would give us time to better promote the movie and get more stardom to stands in."

Comelec rule

But, Barrazo said, "Cesar's nonstarred bid made the issue moot and academic, since our resident Comelec rules."

Anyone seeking public office are not allowed to appear in movies or on TV (how.)

"There was a proposal to work an exception, Barrazo noted, "but we didn't want to politicize Gawad Kalinga."

The movie's US screening schedule now was allowed, said Barrazo. "The screenings in St. Louis on March 3 went well. We had a full house. We expect the same [success] in other cities."

The movie was shown in Fremont, Peninsula, and San Francisco, California last Sunday. It will be screened in Dallas, Texas on March 14; in Los Angeles, California on March 21; and in Seattle, Washington on April 22, among other US cities.

Also planned are showings in Canada, Australia, Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore

'Paraiso'

From page D1

and Italy.

Herrera said the film's Manila premiere is now set on June 12 at the SM Mall of Asia. "Abi will exclusively screen it in 44 theaters nationwide," he said.

Producer Butch Jimenez was of the opinion that a June premiere "seemed too appropriate," since it would coincide with Philippine independence day. He added, "Rony believes the movie is our country's independence from poverty."

Jimenez said they also intend to get accreditation from the Department of Education.

Sought for comment, Monteverde-Gokongwei Entertainment in a phone interview that producer Tony Gloria had discussed the postponement with him.

Unselfish

"When I told Rony [I was running], he was very considerate and supportive," Herrera recalled, describing Gloria as unselfish.

After the campaign, whether I win or lose, I promise to fully support Mr. Gloria in every possible time—in both seasons. I've learned so much from the Gloria people."

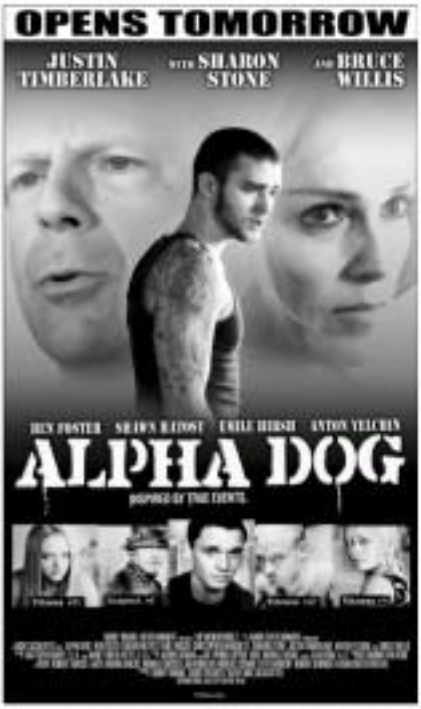
The actor recounted, "In 1998, I visited a Gk village in Cavite, with [singer-actress] Dulce Gayanilo."

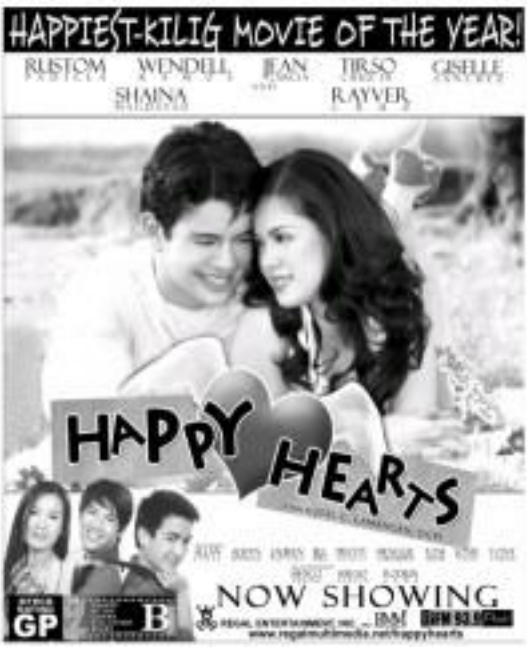
In "Paraiso," Herrera plays Erick Abad, a Filipino-American who helped build such a GK village in Rosario to fulfill his late fiancee's (Gayanilo) wish.

"He had this shooting not episode [Sharon]," Herrera said.

"The episodic director was actor Ricky Davao. Sharon described Davao as "a singer first, an actor second, and a filmmaker third."

The other two episodes of "Paraiso" (upcoming Manuel Sotto ("Yesterday Was a Song Tonight") and Michael V. (Ang Kapitbahay Kong Balikbayan) will be directed by Jose Javier Reyes and Jose Javier Reyes, respectively.





RICKY Davao director one episode.

This movie produced by an award-winning NGO will be shown in 53 cities worldwide, 23 of them in the US

Encouraging

Last week, the Cinema Evaluation Board awarded "Dayuhan" a grade of B, entitling it to a 35 percent tax rebate in the Philippines.

Jessica quoted Mabuti in saying, "We got goosebumps from the audiences in Boston, In. Utah and Las Vegas. It will be shown in 53 cities worldwide, 23 of them in the US."

Encouraging

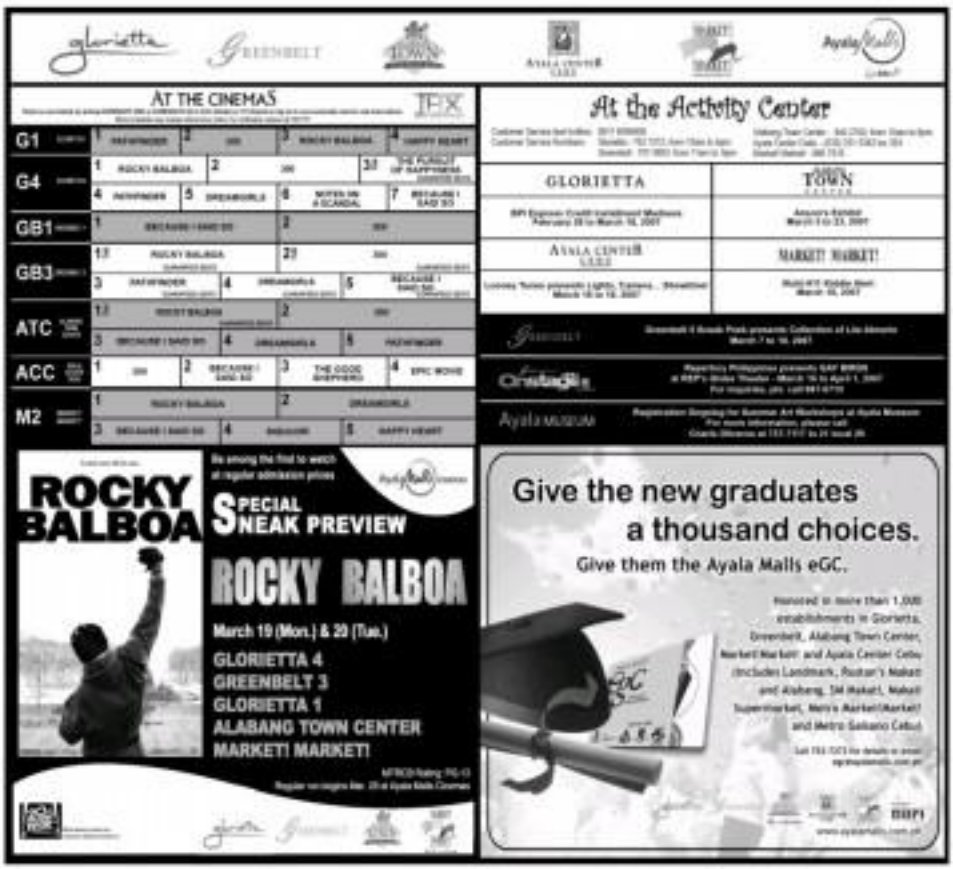
"It is true that ticket sales have been brisk in most everywhere the movie has been scheduled," Ramirez confirmed. "It has been encouraging so far. We attribute this to the support from Couples for Christ and many other known who continue to believe and support CFC."

The international screenings are not ensured by the Comelec ruling, Ramirez stressed. In any case, he said the CFC movie goes beyond politics.

"Ur is about hope," Ramirez said. "While we are barraged with a seemingly endless stream of bad news every day ... Dayuhan shows that something good can arise from calamities and tragedies. If we all do our share, we can fight homelessness and poverty. No Filipino should be a squatter in his homeland."

OPENS TOMORROW

SLEEPING WITH THE DEAD



Tips for interviewers

SO YOU WANT TO BECOME a good interviewer on radio or TV? That's a great idea, because the level of local broadcast interviewer isn't very high, and the Dalai sounds all the help it can get.

Where can you pick up pointers to prepare for your dream/profession or encounter? Why not from the best in the biz? And, to interview their about interviewing.

Barbara Walters offers these tips on how you can get to talk to important live exclusive and unpopular people: "Offer them a friend to answer their critics. And, if you get an initial snub, don't lose heart... pursue, pursue, pursue!"

She adds: "I've always been interested in what makes people tick—maybe that's the whole key. You have to care."

And: "Always try to figure out: What does the public really want to know about the personality?"

Finally: "You have to prepare for the interview...but too much preparation can also be a no-no. Sometimes, after you've studied your interview subject confident that you won't put him or her in a bad light, you should just sit and listen. I try not to pre-interview, because you lose the sense of surprise."

Intuition

Diane Sawyer shares: "I don't think about framing questions ever much. I've got to trust my intuition. The question is an outcome of my feelings about your questions that you get weighed up, you're forgotten your purpose.

"How good interviews evolve instead 'You've got to be kidding' or 'Tell me what you've never told anybody before,' or 'Why?'

VIEWFINDER

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"Sometimes, your stainless produce unexpected results. Somebody blows up and you get something really interesting! Or may never speak to you again, but you get something delightful.

"A perfect interview is when the counterpoint between interviewer and interviewee is exact at every part. You're pushing, they're pushing back, and you size up and they ease back. It never has an awkward moment. It really is a dance at its best."

Demeanor

Finally, Ted Koppel speaks up: "The idea of a good interview is to convey information...but there are many different ways of doing that. Frequently, people reveal more about themselves not by what they say, but by their demeanors.

"In interviewing, you need to be able to sublimate your own opinions, and sometimes even your own personality. Always remember that you represent your audience. You surely ... can to yourself ... take an advocacy role.

"The poorest interviewers are the ones who have to show how smart they are. If you push too hard, or too soon, you can lose your audience of."

"Don't be afraid of interviewing important people. They'll love to open for you—and so will your viewers. Concentrate on the job at hand, and let the questions—and answers—fall where they will."

RICH PERFORMANCES. Jude Law and Robin Wright Penn in "Breaking and Entering," the latest from Anthony Minghella.

Looking on, but not involved

LOS ANGELES—RATHER THAN a forced entry into deep matters of the heart and multifaceted relations, Anthony Minghella's "Breaking and Entering" feels more like casual window-shopping on the inters.

Writer-director Minghella leaves viewers with their faces pressed to the glass, looking on but not really involved with this dramatic study of a restless couple and an immigrant teenager who crosses over a series of burglaries.

Rich performances from pair Minghella collaborators Jude Law, Juliette Binoche and Ray Winstone, along with Robin Wright Penn, bring more depth and texture to the film than the somewhat superficial characters and overly contrived situations warrant.

An emotional frontrunner in much of Minghella's work, including "Cold Mountain" and best-picture Academy Award winner "The English Patient," the director's presence here, bolstering the audience's ability to connect with the people on screen.

Gentrification

"Breaking and Entering" is a return to contemporary London for Minghella, who made his debut with 1991's romantic-comedy-ghost story "Truly Madly Deeply," unlike that history, unassuming little look. "Breaking and Entering" is almost as big a film as his period pieces in production and scope.

Minghella and his team were to great lengths to capture a region of London in flux, impressively presenting the transition of the King's Cross district from a seedy haven for crime and transients to a bustling business and transportation nexus.

In the heart of this massive gentrification is landscape architect Will Francis (Law), whose company has the contract to design open spaces for the King's Cross redevelopment.

Will and his partners have just opened their fabulously modern office in an old laundry, but their company headquarters immediately is hit by ongoing burglaries orchestrated by a gang of Bosnian immigrants.

Tracking out the office in his car at night, Will observes an unfolding the thieves, further straining an already cold relationship with longtime girlfriend Liv (Wright Penn) and her mildly autistic teenage daughter, Bea (Poppy Rogers).

Will's surveillance eventually leads him to bright but delinquent teen Miro (Rafi Gavron), who fled Bosnia as a young boy with his mother, Amira (Binoche), a seamstress.

One strange romantic entanglement and a lot of heated deceptions later, everyone's lives are swirling through traumatic changes that reflect the breaking down to build fresh opportunities in King's Cross itself.

Minghella casts about weirdly, exploring societal translucency, economic and political displacement, bias against immigrants and the notion that owners of the heart may be far more decisive than laborious notebooks.

In the end, the film wraps up awfully neatly considering how sloppy and unresolved the characters' lives had been at the height of their conflicts.

Minghella also injects too many coincidences—coincidental encounters and artificial parallels (what are the odds that Poppy and Miro are both encyclopaedic pianists?).

Chemistry

Law and Wright Penn share great chemistry both in Will and Liv's loving moments and their worst of times. But Binoche, who made for the supporting actress Oscars for "The English Patient," dominates the film with a fearless performance as a lonely mother alternately wooded and betrayed, fiercely willing to do whatever it takes to protect her son.

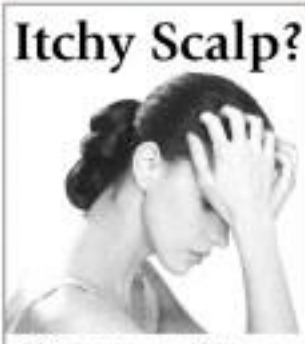
It's nice to see Winstone, known for playing heavies in such films as "The Departed," do an amiable turn as a compassionate cop. Martin Freeman adds some choice humor as Will's business partner.

Juliette Stevenson, star of "Truly Madly Deeply," has a fleeting role as a therapist...her appearance a reminder of how much more could fortunately their on-line, smaller film had been Minghella's career.

"Breaking and Entering," released by MGM and the Weinstein Co., runs 119 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four. AP

Review

Itchy Scalp?



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'Freemasons on Trial'

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANNEL features an investigation on the link between the grisly murder of a prominent Italian businessman in London and the world's most secret society in "Freemasons on Trial" on March 25 at 8 p.m.

A grisly discovery is made in down on June 18, 1982 when "God's Banker"—a prominent Italian business man with ties to the Vatican—is found hanging from Blackfriars Bridge in London. Originally ruled a suicide, the murder of Roberto Calvi casts a suspicious eye on the world's most secret society—The Freemasons.

Rumored in "Freemasons" is an organization shrouded in mystery with secret handshakes, rituals and regulations and its powerful link to women like the Calvi murder.

Some speculators argue that the Freemasons have played a role in everything—from the death of Pope John Paul I to the Jack the Ripper murders.

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